

8클래스 1

마법사의 회귀



Revolution of the 8th Class Mage

– 8클래스 마법사의 회귀 –

- Volume 3 -

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Chapter 62

Full Scale War (1)

The tower lord, Herbert, felt the subtle stares of the sorcerers ever since he had entered the Ivory Tower and reached the height of the tower lord's room. Of course he knew the reason why. He had received Intel from a few prior to entering the castle. However, he did not anticipate such behaviors from the point of his entrance into the tower.

"6th class, already a 6th class. Ha ha."

The tower lord released mana in great fashion after a hollow laughter. Numerous documents and books, chairs and other things have scattered all over the place. The suppressed wrath seemed to be finally overpowering him.

'Such a wicked plan was in the works.'

He thought of him as a ruler, as a king, among the novices. Presumed his level to be only as high as the beginning of the 5th class level. 'The level at which can be controlled as I please.' 5 years of thorough background investigation and private tutoring have been clearly whispered to the tower lord.

'Novice bastard...!'

But, that was not the case.

He was a 6th class grand sorcerer.

Even five of the high level sorcerers are following him.

He has lost one half of the Ivory Tower. No, perhaps, even more.

It felt as if everything was lost.

Everything that was cultivated over the many decades.

Hatred and sense of loss have overcome him.

'Be calm. Think Herbert.'

He is still a novice no matter how great he is right now. A 17 year old novice as of this year. I can't be losing everything to such bastard? Especially for someone that is none other than Herbert, the ruler as the tower lord of the Ivory Tower for many decades.

'It must be restored. Everything must be restored to its own place.'

There was not a time to waste.

Great urgency came over him.

It has to be taken care of before he gets any stronger.

Before he gains even greater strength.

"..."

The tower lord was preoccupied with a great concern.

Suddenly, he has activated a communications line.

It was a direct communications line to his assistant sorcerer.

"Marco, come up here for a moment."

Soon after, a young sorcerer appeared, riding up an elevator. It was 'Marco', who was once deployed to the Mogrian region and already approaching the 3rd year since his tour of duty has ended.

"My lord. Have you called for me, sir?"

"Ah, you are here."

Marco's level has been steady, remaining at 2nd class, for the past 5 years. That itself is enough to make him a very talented sorcerer. The majority of the sorcerers cannot reach beyond the 1st class level, isn't it?

"I am suddenly reminiscing the old times. It has been over twenty years since I saw you first. Marco, of course, you wouldn't remember as you were a newly born infant.

The tower lord's visage has been filled with hatred and caution towards Ian. That

ugliness was nowhere to be seen. Rather, his visage demonstrated kindness and affection more so than the usual.

“It is still vivid to me. A baby wrapped in a cloth looks up at me and smiled. Perhaps, it was because I had no children of my own. I couldn’t fathom handing it to someone else. You, that is.”

It was not widely known, but the tower lord has taken in newly born Marco and nurtured him. Marco, in return, followed the tower lord as his own father. They were like this ever since and the relationship continued to this day.

“You crawled and stood up on your two feet... I had even forgotten to tend to my work from the joy of watching you grow. The child born with the gift of sorcery was not content of being gifted, but have grown to become a validated sorcerer is certainly not anticipated. Now, could it have even been imagined?”

The tower lord looked upon Marco with a pleasant visage.

“This old man is very proud of you.”

“It is all because of your benevolent kindness, my lord.”

The exchanges of pleasantries have broken with that for a while.

It was the tower lord, who is to break the silence.

“... Yes. Do return to your quarters to continue your work. I just wanted to see you once more. Have you not persistently wished it in the recent days?”

There was certain grief in the tower lord’s smile.

Marco has sensed the sadness without any difficulty.

“My lord.”

“Um? What is it?”

Marco was also aware of what has been happening inside the Ivory Tower. A stronger sorcerer has come to the scene, and nearly half of all the sorcerers inside the Ivory Tower have begun to follow him. Of course, it is customary for a generational change

to occur by a higher classed sorcerer. But.

‘The tower lord is more than my father.’

Determined Marco began to speak.

The voice was full of determination.

“If there is anything that I can do to help, I will do all I can in my limited power to support you, my lord. Please instruct me.”

“Ha ha, I shall just accept your words with gratitude.”

“I am sincere. My lord, I am indebted to you, you are my father and more important and greater than all those things combined. If there is an opportunity to repay my debt, I can and will do anything.”

Marco’s ardent loyalty.

The tower lord simply smiled...

“Then...”

After some time has passed, smiling.

Cautiously, the tower lord began to speak.

With delight, Marco replied.

“At your command, sir.”

“Let’s see... Can you follow me?”

“Anywhere sir.”

“Thank you. Truly Thank you.”

Holding Marco’s hand tightly, the tower lord had invoked a crystal ball at the corner of the desk. Then the elevator that was used to access the tower lord’s room and the

inter-floor communication paths all began to close. It was often activated command to close off the area when silence was wanted, or secret meeting was to be conducted.

“My lord, if you close off...”

“Ah, it’s all right. There is an alternate path.”

The tower lord spoke as he took out a book from the bookshelf. It was a greenish, mildew colored book that gave an eerie feeling from just looking at it.

“This book shall guide us.”

“... Sir?”

The amazing thing occurred after the book was opened. To be exact it was immediately after mana was directed at it. Mirroring the color of the book cover, greenish energy emanated from the book. Could that be all? A circular ‘gate’ began to manifest in the middle of the tower lord’s room.

“This, this is...?”

Marco murmured in shock.

It was a magic that he is seeing for the first time.

Is it really sorcery?

“Come, enter this way.”

“In to there, sir?”

“No need to fear. I will enter first, so you can follow me without worry.”

The tower lord entered through the circular, greenish gate as he spoke. As if he has done that many times before, there wasn’t even a minute hesitation.

“...?”

Marco followed the tower lord after some hesitation.

What he had encountered was darkness.

On the other side of the gate was only complete darkness.

“Light.”

The tower lord’s voice was heard from the darkness. At the same time, bright light, light spell was cast. Since it was a light spell cast by the tower lord, the range of the light was immense as well. It was as if the darkness would be ripped open immediately.

“My lord...?”

Marco was bewildered at the same time.

The images all around were as if it was a ‘prison’.

That is, a prison, which was built deep underground.

“What is this place...”

In every which direction, there were only metal cages, further, images of many people were visible through them. There weren’t even any minute movements, but everyone was certainly breathing. Very weak breath of life was in them.

“Do not be too bewildered. They are only fuels.”

“Fuel... , fuels, my lord? What do you speak of all of a sudden...”

The tower lord replied as if it wasn’t even notable.

As he closed the book, the circular gate that led them here disappeared immediately.

“Are they not all people?”

Marco approached the metal cages and observed the people held inside. Then he couldn’t help, but be shocked. There were two reasons. First reason is the fact of what he immediately recognized. Dark eyes only without the whites are what he had

encountered. They were not the eyes of humans.

“Wait...”

One other thing that caused even greater stir and shock was there.

Among the crowd of dark eyes, Marco saw a familiar face.

“Chris...?”

It was ‘Chris’, Marco’s classmate from the academy. Although he was pale, missing his right arm and the shoulder, and even with the hair, it was certainly Chris.

“You were certainly...”

“Nearly died. Due to an accident during sorcery practice.”

The tower lord finished Marco’s sentence. Chris was definitely his friend, who had died due to an unfortunate accident during sorcery practice. But, ‘nearly died’?

“Most of the sorcerers in here are like that. Nearly died during their missions, nearly died due to accidents, or nearly died due to illnesses. There were some sorcerers that were brought here from foreign countries. Those that are not sorcerers will be simply picked up from the back alleys.”

The tower lord spoke in a calm manner.

There was no more kindness.

A human ‘without emotions’.

It was the typical arid voice of such people.

“They were just going to be at the bottom of the society anyways. They would live like trash all their lives. Just because one is a sorcerer does not make a big difference. They would not have gone beyond the range of the 1st class level. To be treated with disdain by others and the shame that comes with it. I just simply saved them from that pit.

“What, What are you...”

“As fules, contributing to the Ivory tower’s empire, that is.”

As the tower lord stopped speaking, he stretched out ‘the Ivory Tower’s wand’ into the empty air. Then ‘scarlet’ colored ‘life energy’ and blue ‘mana’ were extracted from the people confined in the cage and began to merge at the tip of the wand.

“Do not worry. I would not make you like them. I can promise you that”

With the tower lord’s spell, the scarlet colored life energy and blue mana, at the tip of the wand, began to turn black. Surely, that was the ‘black magic’ itself, corrupting all the energy.

“You are like my son, are you not?”

Eventually, the tower lord’s black magic wrapped around Marco. There was no way to escape. Even the shield magic did not work. Rather than even slowing it down, it simply passed and was being absorbed directly.

“Aaaaak...!”

Wrapped around by the black energy, Marco’s eyes began to turn black. Just like the life’s energy and mana that had lost the natural light due to corruption, they turned deep black, such that, not even a single blood vessel could be seen.

“...”

Marco resisted for a while.

Meaningless struggle has come to an end.

However, there was still breath left in him.

“Marco, rise.”

From such state, Marco rose up immediately upon the tower lord’s command. It was same as Helene. There were no longer any whites in the eyes and was in absolute obedience to the tower lord. Stuffy and rough breathing were felt as well. He was reborn as the ultimate ‘pawn’.

“There is still a lot to accomplish. You should endure more.”

The tower lord’s greed did not stop there.

A pawn that possesses more of the normal appearance.

He needed a pawn that was nearly perfect.

‘A pawn that others will not feel discomfort with.’

That was the ultimate objective of the tower lord. A perfect pawn, except with a blind loyalty, which that can be utilized in the light instead of darkness.

“I bid you success. There is not a lot of time. So, you are being activated.”

Again, the tower lord has absorbed life energy and mana from those confined inside the metal cage. From the silence without anyone’s single scream, the second black magic has begun.

“You are like a lucky charm. The only charm that survived when the mana bomb rained on the village.”

It is different than earlier. In fact, it was complete opposite. The eyes that had turned dark black have now began to restore their whites. As if ‘purification’ process was taking place.

“There.”

Pleased with the transformation, the tower lord nodded his head.

He had anticipated that this situation to come true.

“Look at me.”

Marco raised his head according to the tower lord’s command. The eyes appeared to have roughly returned to normalcy, but there was not a shred of emotion.

“Who do you see me as?”

A cautious question was thrown by the tower lord.

“You are the Duke Herbert Leon, the Ivory Tower Lord of the Green River Empire.”

Marco replied in clear tone.

The voice was also his natural tone.

Helene had turned inarticulate and glum.

His tone was completely different than that of her voice.

“Then who are you?”

“I am Marco. I am a 2nd class sorcerer of the Ivory Tower, and now I serve you, my lord, as your appointed assistant sorcerer.”

Following Marco’s reply, the tower lord threw a short sword towards him.

Tang!

Then he commanded.

“Will you slice off one of your little fingers, using that sword?”

It was the tower lord’s order to self mutilate.

However, Marco did not hesitate.

And he had cut off his finger.

It appeared as if he could not even feel the pain.

“Now, I can finally call you my son.”

It was perfect.

The black magic was successful.

A pawn that the tower lord wanted was finally created.

“More fuel will be needed.”

Of course, he didn't necessarily want Marco. It was only that he wanted a powerful black magic spell, one that is complete and more powerful technique of black magic, through which a perfect result has just been created.

“For the purpose of handling a bigger beast.”

Much greater beast, much more fuel needed to freely handle the beast, 'Ian Page', was lacking. Much more human vitality of life and much more sorcerers' mana are needed.

Chapter 63

Full Scale War (2)

Herbert, the tower lord, went on an unplanned holiday break.

The official explanation was 'health issues'.

As it was an open ended holiday, the tower lord's responsibilities have been temporarily delegated to the eldest sorcerer, 'Deckard', and any critical reports to the tower lord or issues requiring urgent decisions were handled through the assistant sorcerer, 'Marco', by him making trips to the tower lord's residence.

"There have been many issues for him to deal with in recent days."

"And his old age also played a role."

Hearing the reason, most of the occupants of the Ivory Tower nodded. Delegation procession was a difficult task in the first place for an old man. Although he was in good health compared to his peers with the power of magic, it wasn't possible to deceive for so many decades.

"Besides, there is also the issue with Ian?"

Furthermore, the rumor of him feeling the pressure with the rise of the 6th Class Ian has swirled around as well.

The tower lord and Ian, the fact that different lords existed for the two pillars of the Ivory Tower has been a hot conversation topic.

"Well then. How things are turning?"

"What, all of a sudden?"

"Are we with the crown prince or with the imperial prince?"

“Who knows, it will be determined by the top echelon anyway.”

“Well, you’re right, we are only nobles outside. But in here...”

While many such conversations were going around surrounding the two, the tower lord and Ian, Ian was sitting in his research laboratory. For some reason, Marco was with him.

“Is the tower lord very ill?”

Ian has been in frequent conversations with Marco, who has returned to the Ivory Tower. It was because he was able to hear the news about his hometown of the Mogrian Region, as recent as 2 years earlier. That has been the case at least up until not too long ago. There was not a reason to have any suspicion as both, Ian and Marco, believed them to be enjoyable occasions.

“Nothing to be too concerned with.”

“That’s a relief.”

However, such pleasant conversation had been cut short at some point. It was right after the tower lord had returned. At first, it was due to the ambience of the Ivory Tower, but now, that doesn’t seem to be the case.

‘The person itself has changed.’

Ian began to feel certain peculiar alienation from Marco. That feeling was there at this moment as well. The same face, the same voice, and the same tone as before, but such alienation couldn’t be hidden. He felt suspicious from the beginning, but it has finally been confirmed.

“If there is nothing more to say...”

“Please, please wait for a moment.”

Ian stopped Marco.

There was still something to verify. Only that he needed some time to think before that.

‘Does he slowly want to see it through the end?’

The reason as to why the tower lord has gone on a sudden, long holiday.

It wasn’t difficult for Ian to guess.

Health concern is only an excuse.

‘He will surely be planning.’

To eradicate his ‘political’ rival.

Planning to find that method.

Or preparing to fine-tune the method.

Of course, the target will be Ian himself.

‘I can roughly envision the secret plan.’

Ian does not have any grudge against the tower lord. No, there was nothing. In their past lives, they served the same master, so there wasn’t any reason to go head to head. Since he knew the true nature, the shunning was based on only from personal perspective.

‘The situation has now changed somewhat though.’

In fact, supporting Ragnard is a very appropriate decision. He was the optimal candidate for the kingship no matter what he had inside his mind. So, he wanted to get it done appropriately. Becoming ‘victorious’ against the tower lord, rather than crossing the line to cause complete ‘destruction’, was Ian’s initial plan.

‘Needlessly harming the family members...’

However, the tower lord had crossed the line.

He had harmed Ian’s family members, too.

The precious things that he had earned after his return.

How could he leave it at that?

He brought the wrath upon himself.

‘The black magic...’

Ian knows black magic. In fact, he is considered to be on the side of those considered to be very well versed in it. He had researched it before, as a precursor thinking that it will help in his efforts to reach higher class level. Of course, it was not effective and as a result the level of interest dried up as expected.

‘It was inhumane even.’

The magic often required ‘inhumane resource’ beyond mana. Life source or spirit, it was understandable why it had been outlawed. But, the tower lord became involved in that magic. Is that all?

‘The black magic that is able to control sorcerers means.’

Ian thought while staring at Marco. If it was as expected, if the sense of alienation being felt from Marco is the black magic, it was possible that the tower lord may have crossed the river of no return.

“Sir Marco.”

He put away his thoughts.

Then he quietly called Marco.

“If I had come to a false conclusion, I respectfully apologize.”

“Pardon?”

“It’s not that you’re ill or anything, but it is possible to feel strange.”

“What are you getting at...”

Ian did not respond any more.

Instead, he raised the great prairie staff straight upward.

And, he quickly absorbed mana.

There was a 'Cancellation' technique that is engraved in the staff.

He was about to execute an elevated magic through that spell.

"Great Cancellation."

Intense gray light wrapped around Marco. The intensity was difficult to even compare to the initial cancellation. If 'cancellation' spell was to remove certain supporting magic, 'the great cancellation' is the 'anti-magic' spell that will wipe out the rival's entire magic.

"Aak, aaak...!"

The effect was immediate. Marco was in pain and felt nauseated as Ian had expected. Vomiting dark energy, Instead of rolling around in vomit, was the absolute confirmation.

"Argh, Auuk ! A-uu-uk! Auuk! Auk...!"

Marco threw up the dark energy for a while.

He began to breathe fast as if he has just come to his senses.

His breathing was rough as if he was just been saved from drowning.

"How are you feeling?"

"Auk! I, I, Auk! Now... Why...?"

It was not the same Marco from just a moment ago. He seemed confused. His sweat covered face and crimson colored eyes spoke loudly as to how he was feeling. It has already been several days that he had been in motion outside of his own volition.

“Marco. Please look at me. Are you OK?”

“I, Ian...?”

Marco finally recognized Ian. At the same time, he was able to assess the situation a bit. His memory has returned to the time prior to when he fell under the black magic spell and the exploding headache that he had earlier seemed to be slowly subsiding.

“I, I think I was having a dream...”

“I don’t think it is a dream.”

“If it is not a dream...”

“It must be the tower lord’s deed.”

Marco’s countenance has hardened. He wanted every vision to be part of a dream, the secret passage, the dark room, the people with black eyes, the cages that confined people, and the tower lord, who had absorbed the life energy out of them. Upon hearing Ian, however, that wishful thinking was completely overturned.

“Have to, have to stop...”

Enduring the chaos, it was Marco’s first words.

“He has to be stopped. Sir Ian. The tower lord has to be stopped!”

He let out a painful scream.

It was the other side of the tower lord, whom Marco has followed all his life.

That other side has clearly been discovered.

Many words have filled his mind and reached the tip of his tongue.

But, there was only one thing that he could say.

It must be stopped.

The tower lord's black magic.

"That's what I am thinking to do. So, please explain to me first."

Contrary to the outpouring words of unorganized emotions from Marco, Ian's words seemed to indicate that much of it were anticipated as he was calm and well prepared.

"What was seen, heard, done to. Do not omit anything."



As the Sun was setting, the official work hours at the Ivory Tower came to an end. From this time until the morning will be dedicated to researching and practicing of magic. If it was under the original circumstances, it would also be the time when Marco would head over to the tower lord's residence. It would have been the time to deliver Ivory Tower's daily main report.

"I will go in your place."

However, today was different. That's because with the report in hand, Ian, himself, headed to the tower lord's residence. He had already been briefed by Marco. The 90 percent of the report was as expected with the remaining 10 percent, appearing to be slightly out of the ordinary.

"The tower lord had opened a portal?"

No way, that could not be possible. 'Portal magic' that provides a conduit between the space and far away space.

'It must've been the artifact's power.'

It was clearly stated that the portal was opened, using a greenish book. Then there is only one answer. That it is not the power of the tower lord, rather the power of the book. It's hard to believe that he had such an item.

'Most likely, the artifact will not appear in the Ivory Tower's artifacts list.'

It seems as though there are many things are being tightly hidden. Leon Herbert, that is, the presiding Ivory Tower Lord. This was the first time, becoming aware, that he

had ever studied black magic.

“Who is it?”

At last, Ian came upon a residence in the far most corner of the imperial city. Isolated from all the boisterous traffic of the imperial city, it is the area that the tower lord had chosen for his residency, desiring a serene setting.

“This is Ian Page, an elder sorcerer of the Ivory Tower. I am here to pay the tower lord a wellness visit and to provide a status briefing.”

“Ugh!”

The sentry was bewildered by Ian’s response. It was not fathomable for a presiding sentry of the Ivory Tower to not recognize the name of Ian Page.

“Ah, yes, please wait for a brief moment, sir?”

“Indeed, take all the time you need.”

Chapter 64

Full Scale War (3)

The tower lord was anticipating Ian's visit. The main reason was because the marginal oversight that was linking him to Marco has been disengaged. Within the empire, Ian was the only one great master sorcerer, who could penetrate the black magic.

"What is your disposition, my lord?"

"Did he come alone?"

"Yes sir. At least, there wasn't anyone nearby."

"Then, advise him to wait for a moment."

Although the tower lord had already confirmed that Ian was alone through detection magic, he had asked the sentry on purpose. Then he opened a portal in the den next to the bedroom.

'You've finally come. Ian Page.'

It wasn't a mistake to have kept Marco active in close proximity to Ian. Rather, it was a set plan. It can be called a 'half inducement strategy', to name it. He wanted Ian to become aware of Marco's transformation and waited for him to pay a visit on his own volition. If he had come with many others, the tower lord would have hidden the medium, but since he came alone, there was no need.

'He should be full of self-confidence.'

Ian was a 6th class grand sorcerer. There are always a numerous possibilities that the table can be turned even after a full proof preparation. To increase the odds of winning, it was necessary to shake up the ability of this 17 year old Ian to discern.

'For the thought of taking me down.'

With the unique abilities and sharp attention, he had penetrated the tower lord's scheme. Then rescue all the victims after defeating the tower lord, who has fallen into the black magic. What a great story it will be? He will be touted as the epic hero by not only the sorcerers, but also by the citizens for the generations to come.

'Although it won't be an immediate epic tale of heroics.'

The dungeon, beyond the portal, wasn't simply a dedicated place for the purpose of studying black magic and confining humans for fuel. Beyond the steel cages was another space, which was much more spacious than thought. In fact, the space was many times bigger than the space where the steel cage was set up on.

"Light."

Countless treasure chests and storage boxes.

Endless show of artifact displays.

Over flowing items of luxury.

That's right. The dungeon was really a 'warehouse'. It was the secret warehouse, where the tower lord has been hiding artifacts, magical items, and valuables that he had been secretly collecting.

"A few of them will no longer be useful after today."

The tower lord murmured as he collected a few artifacts and magical equipment from the displays as if a general heading to a battlefield was putting on an armor suit and cape. Certainly, he was not an easy adversary, so the preparation was a must.

'This is worth the investment in consideration of training a 6th class dog.'

Also, he had picked up an entire storage box and moved it closer to the steel cage. The box was full of unidentified purple gems.

'Soul Stone.'

The name of the purple gems was soul stone, which was used to hold human spirit that was an essential 'ingredient' for 'high level black magic'. Then into the storage box,

full of gemstones, the tower lord had stuck his staff. Surrounded by the steel cages, the staff stood straight up in front of them.

“Gather.”

The staff began to react after the tower lord’s single command. Not only did it absorb the life force from the multitudes of humans from inside the steel cage and mana, it even gathered the grayish white haze from the piles of the soul stones. There were silent screams, which in no doubt, were coming from the confined spirits in the soul stones.

“Awake.”

Immediately after the second order, everything began to turn into black color. The crimson life force, the green mana, as well as the grayish white spirits, all were being newly reborn as the sources to be used for black magic.

“Finish off.”

Then with the blackish blue gemstone that was located at the start of the mouth of the staff as the starting point, black energy has tightly aggregated. It was as if it was fully loaded and ready to call a black magic spell at any time.

“Hmm.”

Incredible amount of soul stones have been consumed. He even borrowed the powers of the artifacts. At this level, even the 6th class ranked sorcerer could not resist easily. Nodding his head as if satisfied, the tower lord left the portal open and as he returned to the bedroom thru the den, he spoke to the servant who was at ready.

“Invite the guest in.”

Sometime has passed. Ian has entered the room after waiting for a while outside the residence. The tower lord wasn’t particularly welcoming. He simply sat in his chair, allusively chanting while enjoying the tea that his servant had brought him.

“You’ve brought yourself today.”

“It is only appropriate to pay a visit when the eldest of the elders of the Ivory Tower is home ill. I beg your quick recovery.”

“Thank you for the words. Here, have a seat. The tea is wonderful.”

With that, Ian sat facing the tower lord. Soon, dreary silence overcame them. Both Ian and the tower lord simply sipped their tea, without particularly saying anything.

“Marco was not feeling very well.”

It was Ian, who had broken the silence.

There was utmost respectfulness on his part.

“Oh, I am concerned whether he is under the influence of what I fell ill with.”

“I have examined him and that does not appear to be the case.”

“That’s a relief. He is a very diligent lad.”

“Yes. That was why I am in his place, providing the daily briefing to you. Also pay a well being visit as well. Is this uncomfortable for you, sir?”

“Ha ha, how could that be? On the contrary, I am most appreciative to be receiving a well being visit by a 6th class grand sorcerer.”

As somewhat of a detailed conversation was being shared, Ian discretely surveyed the surroundings. Especially, he scanned every corner by the bookcase. He could not locate the book that Marco had described. Perhaps, it was hidden in another place.

“Are you looking for something?”

“Ah, as a matter of fact, I had heard an interesting story.”

“An interesting story?”

“It was something that Marco had told me.”

“Then please share it with this old man. I am incredibly bored, having been confined in this house for nearly a month.”

“I will. It’s actually, according to him, there exists a gateway, somewhere in your house

my lord, which takes one to a secret location.”

Ian spoke as he sipped his tea once.

From that behavior, the tower lord could draw a definite conclusion.

‘He is not a replicate.’

A replicate is a fabrication with no real form.

How can it intake any food substance?

Now more relaxed, the tower lord asked a question in response.

“Secret location? What place are you referring to?”

“Well perhaps, it could be the den or the food storage room. Or a secret research laboratory.”

“A desire for a secret research laboratory will come naturally to sorcerer. If it wasn’t for the rule that research is to be done at the Ivory Tower as much as possible, I, too, would have loved to have one in my residence.”

“Do you not already have one? The research laboratory.”

In response to the words from Ian, the straight shooter.

“You are more mischievous than I thought.”

The tower lord didn’t try to put up a false impression either.

“Well, as long as we’re talking about it, would you like to have a tour?”

“Would that be possible?”

“Is there something that will prohibit it?”

“Not at all, but the black magic.”

Ian stopped speaking for a moment.

The two men's eyes met and tangled in the air.

"However, I understood as there being a rule that prohibits it."

"What is the reason for suddenly bringing up the topic of black magic?"

"You know it very well?"

"I am not sure what you are referring to. Are you implying that I am stirring up black magic in a research laboratory by any chance?"

"That could be a possibility."

"That's objectionable. I admit to a research lab. It is also true that a special door exists. It was through the power of an artifact that I had obtained by chance. However, black magic! It is not even worth mentioning at all. I simply do not understand what nonsense that Marco is speaking of."

At least, the tower lord was strongly denying the idea of black magic.

His objective is to lure Ian into and beyond the portal, after which he will engrave the 'control spell' onto Ian's spirit by using the prepared black magic.

"Is that so."

"Of course that is so. Do you wish to verify it?"

"If you would grant that permission, I would like to do so."

"Let's get up. I shall show you at once. As the tower lord, I reject the idea and it gives me no pleasure of being accused of practicing black magic."

The tower lord stood up with forceful determination. Ian also followed behind him to the den. The door connecting the bedroom and the den was open and the already created bluish portal came in to his immediate view.

"That is the gateway."

“The color is distasteful.”

“I thought so too, initially.”

As if to demonstrate that it was safe, the tower lord quickly put forward his foot inside and beyond the portal. It was the situation as described by Marco with respect to the entire portal, spewing out of a unique book. Even Ian has never seen such an artifact before.

“Do enter.”

Only darkness lied beyond the portal. However, Ian did not prematurely use the light spell. Instead, he was securing visuals with the magic that is many levels higher than that that even the tower lord could not have imagined.

‘Night Vision.’

Ian’s eyes flashed in green and the darkness became familiar to him. Rather, going beyond gaining familiarity, the visuals became different. The darkness was no longer inhibiting Ian’s vision.

‘It is more serious than I thought.’

The place thought to be the dungeon beyond the portal. He had heard about the place, but after seeing it in person, he was greatly perplexed. It was unfathomable that it was real to see sorcerers and citizens being confined to be used as fuels.

‘Such person had remained as the great tower lord in the past life.’

The name, Herbert Leon, has eternally remained as one of the greatest tower lords in the history of the Ivory Tower. It was the moment that made him to feel, to the bone, the other side of the history’s mess.

“Ian, do you know by any chance?”

The tower lord’s voice coming from the darkness was shaking. The reason for that minute shaking was certainly because of ‘excitement’ and ‘anticipation’.

“I, at one time, also wanted to be a hero. A sorcerer, who protects the empire and saves its citizens in despair, all by oneself.

The tower lord spoke as he slowly walked towards the staff that was set up straight in advance. Although, he was in very close proximity of the staff, he didn't particularly try to raise it. He only vacantly stared at it.

“Over the years, he realized one thing. Reckless behavior alone will not bring about changes. There was power out there that will make me a hero.”

With a single motion of his hand, the dark energy that was hovering over the staff began to separate like serpents as they moved in slow creepy fashion.

“My single decision has the power of moving many talents. Through that comes the true power that can assure the well beings of the empire and its citizens.”

Finally, the tower lord's hand motion pointed towards Ian.

The dark energy also targeted Ian's body.

“People call that energy as power.”

The dark energy spread and quickly wrapped around every parts of Ian's body as if it was unavoidable presence of royalty. It wrapped the arms, legs, head, neck, and the body as well as the tip of his feet. It was as if black ink was dumped all over him.

“Ahhhhh...!”

Even for Ian, he could not help, but moan in agony. The black magic mixed with sufficient mana and life force, along with soul stone and many artifacts has indiscriminately shaken all of Ian. If it was an ordinary person, it would not have stopped with a moan.

“Light.”

Finally the tower lord has brightened up the space with light spell. He approached Ian with swaggering walk. His countenance was one that of full of ultimate satisfaction.

“Be part of that power for me. So, the empire can be protected in whole. The citizens

can also be saved as a whole. The young, like you, the old, like I, ultimately all want a hero, isn't that so?"

More and more, the black magic was being absorbed into Ian's body. The eyes have darkened then the white color returned. As it was for Marco, Ian has fallen flat onto the ground as he slowly recovered his conscientiousness.

"Here, do rise."

Ian's response to the tower lord's command was immediate.

He rose up at once and looked at the tower lord.

"Ha, ha ha ha...!"

The tower lord went into a loud laughter.

It was filled with twisted ecstasy.

He was, after all, a 6th class grand sorcerer.

The first 6th class sorcerer in the history of humanity, that was.

Such existence has fallen to being a puppet.

Not as anyone's, but Herbert's own puppet.

"This was so easy. This was nothing!"

His old face was twitching, at the moment, as the devil. Perhaps, that was the true nature of 'Herbert Leon', the Ivory Tower's lord.

"There answer me. Who am I?"

It was the same question that was thrown to Marco.

"You are the Duke Herbert Leon, the empire's Ivory Tower's lord."

And even the reply was the same.

At least it was like that up to this point.

“And.”

However, the puppet, ‘Ian Page’, has added one more answer following that. Was it because the scope of his thought was greater?

“You’re a crazy son of a bitch.”

“What? What did you just...”

“I said, you are a crazy son of a bitch.”

It was even before the tower lord has completed his question in his response. Was that all? It was even before he had changed his continence. It was much earlier than for him to truly understand what was being happening.

Puck!

A blunt sound has echoed loudly. Ian’s choice of action was not sorcery. It was only the strong one punch with Ian’s fist, strongly hitting the old, ugly face of the tower lord.

“Aaak!”

Having been fallen on his back, the tower lord held on to his smashed nose. Trained with the help of the mana, his fist delivered much more powerful punch than ordinary hammering. His mind went beyond numb and was at the edge of being fainting.

“Hugh! Whoo...!Hugh! Whoo...!”

With the mana’s energy, the tower lord quickly recovered from the injury and his senses. He stared up into Ian’s eyes in shock. The ecstasy that filled his face has long disappeared for a while already.

“Haw, haw, how...?”

Chapter 65

Full Scale War (4)

“Haw, Haw, How...?”

The tower lord still had enough energy to battle.

However, he did not prepare any magic.

It seemed that he had already lost the will to fight.

“No way, there is no way...”

There was a sense of embarrassment, but he realized that it meant nothing.

He resorted to the ultimate means, the black magic that burned off hundreds of human spirits.

He believed that even the 6th class sorcerer would not be able to resist. After all, even the tower lord, who was a 5th class master, had been helplessly afflicted by it. However, it didn't work. Not against that Ian Page.

“Hugh.”

Ian walked towards the tower lord with heavy footsteps. Irrespective of the outcome, he pressed his forehead, indicating that the moaning and pain that he had just suffered were real.

“My lord.”

The reason why the black magic did not work on Ian.

The reason was more complicated than thought. First off, the difference in the basic ability was enormous. The gap between what the tower lord had estimated for a 6th class to be and a true 6th class was much wider. It meant that the massive quantity and high quality mana was shielding both the body and the mind.

“And you were profusely denying that it wasn’t black magic.”

The second factor was the ‘queen’s amulet’, which was given to Ian by Oliver, as a payment for accepting his request for 5 years of sparring exercise. It was known to have the power to clear one’s mind, and the effect was as described. It had thoroughly filtered the force of evil energy that was attempting to infiltrate his mind.

“Do you know what this is?”

“...?”

The third and the final reason.

It was the great black magical weapon, the pink colored light powder, which Ian had taken some time to prepare before leaving for the tower lord’s residence. One fistful of the powder was kept inside a pouch.

“It is called the fairy dust.”

“Fair, fairy dust...?”

“Not just any, rather the queen’s dust.”

Fairy Queen’s Dust.

That was the most important factor of the day.

“Perhaps, you may know, the fairies are known to possess the eyes that penetrate evil. Even able to filter them. Or annihilate them all together.”

The fairy queen referenced ‘evil energy’ when she first saw Ian. As she did not see that evil energy, she had relieved her people from any anxiety. The eyes that see through or the power of filtering wickedness or evil spirit was the ‘power’ that had been endowed upon the fairy race as the descendents of the dragon.

“That is nonsense...”

Other words, there was a good reason that gave him confidence in attempting this raid all by himself. The innate power and the artifacts’ help, and even the fairy queen’s power, also known as the god’s method. Ian, in his present form, is none other than a

‘nightmare for the black sorcerers’.

“You were too hasty.”

The tower lord wanted to take advantage of Ian’s naïve judgment. However, it was Ian, who took advantage of incoherent judgment skill of his adversary. From the tripartite agreements to the rise of a 6th class sorcerer, the many days filled with Ian’s every accomplishments that overcame as a storm, made the tower lord anxious.

“If you were in your usual mindset, you may not have attempted such a bad move. You must have been quite anxious.”

The tower lord took those words as ridiculing him.

In fact, it was ridiculing.

“Bastard!”

Was it due to being mocked, the tower lord began his last stance after recovering from his sense of loss. Wielding his staff, the tower lord gathered the life energy and mana from the humans confined in the steel cage.

“Decay!”

Soon, the energy of malady fiercely attacked Ian like poison. Of course, Ian did not even blink an eye. There wasn’t even any counter magic. All that he did was spread a small amount of the fairy queen’s pink light powder into the air.

Whooooo-!

However, the effect was incredible. As the fairy queen’s dust spread, it comingled with the energy of malady and burned in golden fire. The black magic’s evil was being burned off.

“Your ability to attack is dwindling.”

“Argh...!”

“You are the tower lord, after all.”

There was nothing even a tower lord could do. The adversary was a 6th class sorcerer. The basic elementary magic will not even provide a 1 percent chance of victory. The only chance that he may have was to use a discernible black magic. At least, it was the only way according to the tower lord's assessment.

"Let the curse of pain be...!"

At the moment of the tower lord was, again, about to chant a black magic spell.

"Blink."

Blink allows instantaneous transportation within a short distance.

Through it, Ian has reached the tower lord's back.

"Dispel."

Dispel spell was the nexus.

It was the magic that blanks out the adversary's technical ability to calculate for a few seconds.

"Mana drain."

Ian's magic did not stop. He even began to absorb all of the tower lord's mana. Ian was about to make the tower lord impotent to battle. Only then he can accomplish what he had hoped to accomplish.

"Argh...!"

The extra mana was being quickly draining. Any sorcerer would definitely feel the pain. The tower lord was not an exception. In fact, being a 5th class sorcerer would cause him to feel even more extreme pain.

"Please do rest. So, I can take care of business."

The tower lord's body fell slowly.

He was conscious, but his body gave him trouble.

It was the after effects of acute loss of mana. The after effects were felt greater with older age.

“Light.”

Ian started up the light spell instead of night vision. Night vision requires consuming of large quantity of mana. In addition, it causes the entire world to appear in green, so the basic application of this magic was for different purpose.

“Indeed.”

Ian did not inspect the people in the steel cage. Instead, he inspected the artifact displays and many storage boxes first. Of course, he will rescue the people. Ian wasn't particularly a saint, nor was he a fallen, evil one like the tower lord, who turned his back on the humanity. There was a reason for it. The reason for him to come to this place all alone.

“I knew it.”

Ian showed a faint smile.

He wanted to verify it for himself with his own eyes.

The doubt that he had from the previous life.

That doubt was, in fact, now been verified to be true.

“It was hidden, so just couldn't be found.”

The tower lord of the previous life was highly acclaimed in many ways.

He had paved the way for the unification of the continent as the tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

The lord of the Ivory Tower was always kind and courteous.

He was the tower lord of the Ivory Tower, who was known for being frugal and praised for his integrity.

The last one was what had bothered Ian for the longest time.

“What integrity, how much has he laundered.”

After the death of the previous life’s tower lord, even without any family members to pass down to, the wealth that he had returned to the empire was negligible. Others had believed him for his words, but Ian had traced it to the end. He searched for the enormous wealth that the tower lord may have hidden away, somewhere in the world. “I had failed then.”

He wasn’t able to locate them at that time.

He now realizes why he couldn’t find them.

It’s because they were hidden away at a secret location beyond the portal.

‘It’s enormous.’

The number of artifacts that he had in his possession was already overwhelming. That implies that the number of artifacts hidden here will be many more than the number of registered artifacts at the Ivory Tower. Gold and silver were also similar. How and why did he securely hide so much wealth and not even spend them? That is, until he dies and disappear.

“Were you planning to take them to the afterlife?”

Ian asked the tower lord, who was flabby, yet collecting his breath. He seemed to have recovered somewhat from the after effects. It’s only that his old body could not follow his will.

“Do you want them?”

“A few of them.”

Ian did not hide his inner thoughts.

In fact, he was planning to set aside several items for himself.

Especially set aside the book that opens this portal.

“I commend your honesty.”

“It is you, who kept them hidden away too much, my lord.”

After investigating the artifacts displays for a while, Ian, once again, approached the tower lord. Slowly, he wanted to keep things in order. Definitely organize them as how Ian wanted them to be.

“Then let’s finish.”

“Well, wait!”

Was the tower lord in fear as Ian approached, or did he think that Ian will not finish him off in a normal fashion. He shook both hands as he made a proposal.

“I am not sure what your intentions are, but nothing, good, will come out in the way of harming me! You could come to fervently lament it.”

“Lament?”

“Do you truly believe Marco is the only one? No, of course not! My many servants are out there. They are even more useful than Marco.”

“And?”

“Haaa! Do not play dumb, my child. They should be already on the move. Unless I give a signal, they will never stop. I have implanted an instruction in them from the beginning. To target only two things.”

The ‘two things’ the tower lord’s servants will target.

It was too obvious what he was implying.

“The family and the crowned price.”

“Well. Do you wish to negotiate?”

The tower lord’s eyes flashed in grand fashion.

It appears that he had found an escape hatch.

“My proposal is simple. We both forget about what had occurred today. If this portal is not discovered, there isn’t any evidence that will lead to me. You will not be able to bring me down with only few words.”

The yellowish eyes of the tower lord were fixated on Ian. The desire to keep everything alive was wiggling inside him.

“I reject it.”

However, Ian’s response was not what the tower lord had expected. Moreover, there wasn’t even any hesitation. If there was even a smear of uncertainty, such definite response would not have been possible.

“Then only when your mother and the crowned prince die...!”

“Do try if you can.”

“What...?”

“I said, do try.”

Ian laughed as if it was absurd.

There was an aura of confidence in his continence.



(Do you dare the powder of this body...!)

The pink colored roof of a grand mansion.

There was a light pink colored furry cat, leisurely sitting in the middle of the roof. Actually, it wasn’t really in as leisurely fashion as its posture shows. It’s only that Vanessa is showering the cat with extreme love on the cute cat that came here to escape Douglas’ torture.

(Ah, my fate. I lived much too long.)

On top of that, there was an advisory to be cautious of the surroundings. And the advisory was from none other than the kid, Ian Page. That was what was bothering it the most.

(Why did they grant the power of kinship to humans...?)

It was not understandable no matter how hard it had tried.

To borrow the human's vulgar expression.

(Telling me to go screw myself?)

The cat thought like that for a while, no, the fairy queen transformed herself back into her natural form and shook her head wildly.

(What, what am I thinking about now...!)

It's impure. It's extremely impure and vulgar. How could, I, their greatest descendant, could speak in such vulgarity? This is all humans' fault. I must have been tainted by their vulgarity since I've been with such vulgar entities.

"Who is it?"

It was at that time.

A voice was heard from beneath the roof.

It was the voice of Vanessa, Ian's mother.

It was when it came to herself again as the startled fairy queen gave a sigh of relief. It looks like a human guest has come.

(... Uh?)

The fairy queen glimpsed over at the guests beyond the gate. Through her clear eyes, she saw a conspicuous mist. The eyes that can see evil energy, the ability to see the truth has kicked in to action.

(They are...)

The reason that Ian had advised to take caution about the surroundings are here.

It appears as if those exact reasons have come.

With such dark and abhorrent evil energy in their hearts.

(They've no fear.)

How dare they come to the residence of the fairy queen, the queen of the fairy race that sees and chases away evil energy? Only an underling of evil energy dares to come?

(OK. I shall give you a surprise welcome today!)

As a matter of fact, it was looking for an opportunity to find ways to relieve stress. There was much embarrassment and stress derived from this irritating cat act, and isn't it about the time to release all these emotions all at once?

Krrrrrrrr...!

Dark clouds came to the skies over the residence.

The lightning's energy has also slowly gathered around.

The 'wrath of the gods', which will remain a mystery of the empire throughout the hundreds of years to come, is about to commence with the start of the fairy queen's emotional release.

Kkkk-kwa-kwang! Kwang! Kwang! Kkkkk-kwa-kwa-kwang!

"Aaak!"

The great lightning and loud thunder shook the entire capitol. As a result, the crowned prince, which was on his first secret inspection mission, was startled to his core.

"My lord, are you okay."

“What, what is this sudden thunder and lightning?”

Immediately leaning on Oliver, the crowned prince looked up in the sky. No matter how long he looked, it was just dark, not necessarily in any condition to cause lightning. This is what one calls bolt of lightning out of the blue sky?

“My heart just about stopped.”

“The god’s anger seems great. Please return to the castle.”

“What? Already? No, nothing was accomplished,”

“But, my lord.”

It was after a long consideration that the crowned prince had undertaken this secret inspection mission. Not too long ago, there were only praises for Ragnar, no matter where he went, but now his popularity has reached a new height. It seemed to be the right time to explore.

“However, now. I am curious about one thing.”

“Please issue your order, my lord.”

“Well, that is... That is.”

After a short pause, the crowned prince continued.

“Is it possible for me to learn sword fighting?”

“By sword, do you mean.”

“Nothing too fancy, just for self defense... is it too late even for that? So that I can just look good. Like with skills to draw the sword from its casing in great form, perhaps...

Cheee-ing!

Was it a demonstration of how to draw a sword in great form.

Or was his ego been rubbed in a wrong way as a knight.

Oliver suddenly drew his sword.

The force was as if he was about to slash something.

“No, I didn’t mean to teach me right now...”

“My lord.”

“I will learn diligently for once.”

“Please, stand behind me.”

“What?”

Oliver fixed his treasured ‘Mundile’, the sword artifact that he had received from the emperor. Even the crowned prince was startled by that. Oliver never draws the Mundile sword as the first choice for a weapon. However, it was different this time.

“2nd knights of the emperor, protect the lord.”

Immediately following the command, plain clothed knights gathered from all around and surrounded the crowned prince.

“Show yourself.”

Oliver was quietly growling in low tone of voice. Then there, a woman in black robe slowly appeared. Except Oliver, the other knights could not even feel any entity’s presence. It was definitely magic.

“It was you.”

Oliver recognized the woman in black robe.

It was a very well known and familiar face.

Once the hood has been removed, it was even more certain.

“Lady Helene, high ranking sorcerer of the Ivory Tower.”

Oliver's eyes have sunken deep.

She was, at one time, the 2nd highest ranked sorcerer of the Ivory Tower.

Displaying a murderous intent, she was approaching.

It did not matter what the reason was.

Helene is an assassin.

“Why did you obstruct my lord's passage?”

She did not reply.

But, that was enough to draw a conclusion.

The moment of life or death has come.

As a swordsman that combats sorcerers.

Chapter 66

Full Scale War (5)

“On whose commission, have you come?”

Oliver slowly approached Helene. He appeared to be serene, but inside the gloves, his hands were already moist with sweat.

“I know that you are not someone that will act on own volition.”

Finally, the two stood at a handshake length apart from each other.

The differences in their sizes were striking.

However, what about the difference in their powers?

“What will a mere knight, such as you, do?”

It was the same Helene’s voice of the old days. There were no longer any dark spots around the eyes. The personality has also returned to normalcy. The only difference was the absolute, blind loyalty to the tower lord, as a result of the much advanced black magic’s influence.

“Have you been hit in the head with an arrow?”

“What an impossible woman to be talking to.”

“Yeah?!”

Oliver’s questioning ended there. From this moment on, everything that he does will go down the ‘history for the first time’. The first prose of the story will be ‘Oliver dared to launch the initial attack against a high ranking sorcerer’.

Chi-Chang!

Of course, battling wasn't an easy path. Her staff was stronger than steel, her physical strength and reactive speed, in countering the sudden sword attack, were much more advanced than that of a skilled knight. The power has certainly come from the innate talent, supported by sorcery and mana.

Keeanng! Kkang! Keeaanng!

Helene retreated from Oliver's continuous, changing attacks. Instantly distancing herself from Oliver, she summoned magic immediately.

"Pyro-blast."

Six huge, fiery balls of bullets came, flying into Oliver's direction. For an ordinary knight, it would have been impossible to dodge such a high level of multi-shooting magic, as Helene showed an aura of confidence in her face.

"Time to die."

However, her wishful thinking wasn't to be. Who was Oliver? He was, after all, the 'swordsman with the skill to cut through fire', which even Ian, often used to tell in his earnest astonishments that that was a skill that only existed in mythical stories.

Shook!

A gigantic fireball was sliced into two halves and diagonally broke apart. It was like as if a passage has been opened through the walls of fire that was surrounding Oliver. Oliver dashed out of the fire through the opening and fiercely reengaged.

"Cut, cut through fire?"

It was the sword skill that even Ian was astonished about. Forgetting what's happening, Helene murmured. But, she could not remain in shock for very long. Strengthened by mana, Oliver's every bit of muscles, veins and joints created movements that are faster and stronger than many ferocious beasts.

"Aaah!"

Sorcerer must maintain distance at all times. Of course it wasn't an easy task. Applying a few spells could create the needed distance even when a knight encroaches with all

his might. That was the biggest difference between a sorcerer and a knight. However, this advantage did not work on Oliver at all.

Sheekang! Kiang! Kang!

It was fast.

It was very, very fast.

He was even more agile than when he had sparred with Ian last. No matter how a sorcerer tried to create the distance, he was already anticipating, be it ten or hundred paces, at every turn.

“Ye-yaaaap!”

Oliver has never, even once, neglected his training. It was such that the resulting product of god given talent and god given efforts could only be dared to be called ‘Oliver Raywood’.

“Aaak...”

Seeing her-self being pushed back, Helene grew unrest. A sorcerer’s ego could not take, being pushed back by a knight, with a stride. Irrespective of being dominated by black magic, her innate ego remained as when she was first born.

“How dare a Halfling!”

‘Halfling’ is a derogatory name that refers to those who were born with one of either mana heart or mana brain. Although it was quite an insulting name calling, Oliver did not even blink an eye. Rather, he replied calmly.

“Keep blabbering.”

“What...?”

Helene, on the other hand, became angry over a simple remark. Her two fists were engulfed in fire. Then two, gigantic ‘fire fists’ appeared over her shoulders. It was a familiar magic to Oliver.

‘It was the same magic as Ian’s, the burning punch.’

It was the same frequently encountered ‘burning punch’ magic over the 5 years of sparring with Ian. Although they were smaller in sizes and in numbers compared to Ian’s, the format itself was the same. Perhaps, the method of attacking would be the same as well.

‘Of course, even the short, effective duration time would be the same.’

An ordinary knight would have been taken aback. Maybe, the Oliver of 5 years ago would have been flustered as well. He faced a pair of overwhelming, blazing fists. In fact, they were even fast and accurate.

‘Dodging is all that’s needed.’

But, Oliver did not have any problems. All that he had to do was, dodge. As the effective duration of the magic will be short lived and it will fade away. If he doesn’t become overwhelmed by the gigantic fist sizes, it would be surprisingly an easy task.

“You, you shall not die a peaceful death.”

“Is that right? But, I will take you alive for sure.”

“...?”

“I have to interrogate you to find out who is behind you.”

Grinding her teeth, Helene wildly swung her blazing fists. With each swing, the ground exploded and the temperature rose. Although he had dodged perfectly, the ends of his garments became blackened.

“You little rat!”

It was Oliver, who has been dodging those blazing fists in irregular circular fashion.

‘Now!’

As if he had changed his strategy, Oliver launched a full frontal attack. Was it a bad decision as he has presented a perfect target for Helene’s blazing counter punch?

“Die!”

Helene’s screeching was filled with blood and mocking laughter. However, she did not realize it. It was Oliver, who was the better expert, of the two of them, of the ‘burning punch’.

Puff-!

The two blazing fists that had neared Oliver’s face had simply puffed away in all directions. It was because the effective duration time has expired.

“What the...?”

But, Helene did not recognize that subtle expiration timing as she saw it very differently. To her, it was as if Oliver had pierced through the fireball with his own abilities.

“Mana barrier!”

Helene hurriedly continued with mana barrier.

Krrrrr!

Oliver’s sword touched on that surface. It was in a nick of time. If she had failed to create the protective shield, one of her shoulders would have been cut off. She could not anticipate Oliver to penetrate through the fireballs.

“Ha, ha-ha...”

A streak of sweat fell down Helene’s cheek. But, it was manageable. There was ‘mana barrier’ to a sorcerer. The ‘mana barrier’ could never be penetrated by brute force and swords. Helene had always been very reluctant to use the protective shield spell, but she was given no other choice this time.

“There. That’s right. A Halfling like you will never come close no matter how hard you tried...”

He was not an ordinary knight.

He was much stronger than anticipated.

Even Helene recognized Oliver as such.

However, with this barrier, she will always be safe.

She just needed to find the right opportune time and fight again.

Oliver probably knew that too.

It was definitely so.

“Good. Finally, we can really get started.”

Captain Oliver became even more serene.

He spoke as he was fixing his grip on the sword.

“I wanted to show it off when the day came to battle the duke Ian.”

“What...?”

Helene could not understand Oliver’s words. This was the ‘mana barrier’. Swords were nothing and even mobilizing catapults would not even make a dent against it. But then do what? A mere swordsman is going to do what?

“Practicing in advance is not a bad thing either.”

Oliver cut his own hand with the sword.

It was a much deeper cut than thought.

Obviously, there was dark, red blood stain on the sword.

Was it just a stain? Rather, the blood poured out.

So the blades of the sword would become soaking wet.

“We have no ability to extricate mana as Halflings as you’ve spoken of.”

Subduing voice of Oliver was resonating.

He held his sword with the wounded hand.

The crimson colored blood continued to streak down his sword.

“However.”

Wet with Oliver’s crimson red blood, his artifact sword, ‘Mundile’ vibrated slightly. It was exactly the same affect that occurs when mana is injected.

“It was possible briefly.”

Mana is an energy that circulates within the blood stream. That energy persists even after the blood is extricated from the body. It will evaporate soon, but as Oliver has expressed, it remains there very briefly.

Thuud, thuud, thuud, thuud -!

The vibration on the artifact sword, ‘Mundile’, has become stronger. On top of that, the entire length of the sword surged with the natural blue light of the mana. Even at this moment, the replenishment effect of the mana energy from the streaking blood was occurring.

“Let me show you.”

The white blades have now overwhelmingly been covered with blue light.

Rather, it was on fire with mana’s blue light.

“With all of a Halfling’s might.”

Oliver’s sword was raised vertically.

That sword has firmly pierced through.

At the mana barrier that Helene had created.

Towards that strong protective shield, it came.

Sh-reeeeek!

Even the sound differed.

And an amazing thing happened.

The knights' eyes that were witnessing it all,

Those eyes were opened wide as if to explode in astonishment.

“Krrr...!”

Helene felt the same as well. Rather, it was beyond feeling the same. The ‘sword’ has sliced through the ‘mana barrier’. A mere iron has sliced up the protective shield as if it was just a piece of paper. Was that all? It even sliced through Helene’s arm. Thick blood splashed all over. As the knights were in wonderment, Helene felt extreme pain and felt the loss of the all sensibility.

“No, No way...”

Startled, Helene began to retreat. She summoned every bit of energy to escape. However, Oliver’s attack and the sword were much faster than she was. There wasn’t even a moment to think straight.

Shook!

A large piece of Helene’s robe got sliced off.

If it had been any deeper, her thigh would have been cut off.

Shook!

It was, yet, another part of her robe.

If it had been any deeper, it would have been her wrist.

Shook!

Beads of Helene's blood spread out into the air.

The back of her hand has been slightly cut.

Shook!

It was much bigger this time.

One of her fingers went flying off.

One of her fingers that was as white as white jade.

"Aaaaak!"

Helene let out screams. The right thumb and the tip of her middle finger were cut off. However, she could not stop moving. With the 'sword', burning in blue light, drenching in blood, Oliver's aggressive attack appeared to Helene as a 'ghost wielding a sword'.

"Stay, stay away!"

Helene was under the influence of black magic. Although the spell's strength has been eased as she was able to speak and display her natural personality, her movements and thought processes were still being dominated by it. Yet, she felt it, the fear towards Oliver, shrieking sounds of terror.

Sh-ook!

Eventually, Oliver's movements overtook that of Helene's.

She became vulnerable as her side was exposed.

"Aaaaak!"

Intense pain!

Helene's movements became dull.

The arm, fingers, now her side were injured.

Intolerable pain swept over her.

“Hugh...! Hugh!

Even her breathing has become strained.

There was a moment of letting down of her guard.

“...!”

A single streak of lightning sword sliced through Helene.

To be more precise, it went through her neck.

Helene could not even let out a scream.

The vision of her head, being decapitated,

Like a fountain, she saw crimson blood shooting up,

She had truly felt such a disastrous event.

“...?”

But, that was only an illusion.

Her head has not been severed.

There was only a thin mark on the neck.

“Uh... Uh?”

Helene examined her neck, with her shaking hand. It was still intact, but no sound would come out of her vocal cord. There wasn't anything that she could do. Shivering her eyes, she could only look up at Oliver.

“Have I not told you?”

Helene has become totally impotent to battle.

Oliver withdrew his sword after seeing that.

Then he recited in a quiet voice.

“That I will take you alive for sure.”

Will interrogate to find out who was behind her.

But, he didn't necessarily have to say that.

“Allowing death is the final form of mercy.”



“Do, do try! What does that...?”

“Why are you acting so dumb? Did you really think that I would come unprepared? You've already have past experiences.”

Ian believed.

Fairy Queen was even surer.

Oliver, on the side of the crowned prince, was believable. It would have been also true even if a high level 4th class sorcerer had come. Even if two of them had come, they could have been defeated. That's how Ian had scripted the situation. 'Oliver Raywood' was the unique genius, and of course, the unique 'grinder'.

'He was definitely the first swordsman of the continent.'

Not just an empire, rather a continent.

That's how Ian had scripted Oliver.

He will only get stronger going forward.

“No matter how one prepares, it would not be possible to defeat a sorcerer...”

“Fairy Queen’s Dust.”

Ian had cut off the murmurings of the tower lord, at once. He spoke as he slowly shook the pouch that held the fairy queen’s dust.

“How do you think this came into my possession?”

“..”

Fairy is a very strong ‘fortune of gods’. There definitely existed such recordings at the Ivory Tower as well. If one was the tower lord, he would have certainly read every bit of it.

“The negotiation has ended. There is nothing to gain.”

Ian’s stern voice continued.

“You will most likely be put on trial. For such offenses, death penalty is certainly written on the wall. I will make sure that’s what will happen. I will be glad to accept the Ivory Tower that you’ve worked so hard, putting blood and sweat for many decades, to cultivate.”

“You, Bastard...!”

As if about to devour, the tower lord fiercely stared at Ian.

That was all that he could do.

What else could he do?

There was no more mana, no more black magic.

“Ah and... Since you’ve played dumb already, I’d ask that you be a real dummy. That will make my future work easier, I reckon.”

“What...?”

Understanding the true meaning behind it, the tower lord retreated back slowly.

Rather, he 'crawled' should be the better description.

"Wait! Please, Stop! There is a better way..."

"I will just limit it to excessive side effects."

There was no more talking. Realizing the situation, Herbert, the tower lord, made the final move with recovered mana.

"In fact, I didn't mean to take it this far."

Finally, Ian's hands reached the tower lord.

To be precise, he snatched his head with both hands.

He wanted to directly get to the brain.

Of course, the tool was 'mana'.

"Ah, Aaaaak...!"

Mana began to be injected in huge quantities. Jerking roughly, the mana began to heave the tower lord's brain. Feeling such pain for the first time in his life, the tower lord let out deafening screams.

"As the tower lord, it is appropriate to raise authority of the Ivory Tower. Supporting the 5th prince, Ragnar, rather than the crowned prince, is understandable. Having hoarded such wealth? A man could do that. But bringing my family into this was the worst mistake that you have committed."

"Aaah! Aaaaaak!"

Ian remained cool even in the face of such terrible screams.

"Doesn't the king's wrath exist in everyone?"

Chapter 67

Dark Veil (1)

Things quickly came to order.

Talk about lightning speed.

It was how a nationally urgent situation this was.

“The atrocious crimes of Herbert Leon, the tower lord, have been uncovered to the world. Not only did he sacrifice the sorcerers, he even took the powerless peasants’ lives as the energy source for black magic. I am considering no mercy towards him as I shake in the weight of his cruelties.”

Filled with anger, the emperor’s voice thundered throughout the great palace.

“Henceforth, all of Herbert Leon’s duties and titles shall be stripped and he will be put to death, and the manner of death shall be a public execution.”

So, Herbert, the tower lord, was imprisoned after being sentenced to a public execution. Due to his mental instability from the ‘side effects of the black magic’, he had even failed to form any counter-argument. It was as how Ian had planned.

“Also, I shall personally head all the investigations pertaining to whether or not there exist additional culprits or other black magicians besides the tower lord. There shall not be any breaks for any rank in this investigation process.”

‘No breaks for any rank’.

It certainly contained many implicit meanings.

Those who were in close relations with the tower lord, certain aristocrats, servants and magicians, and even Ragnard, the 5th prince. It was an expression to group all of them into one.

“Those, who were captured and unknowingly participated in the tower lord’s scheme, shall be allowed to return to their normal lives after recovery. Through this event, if you have lost your work and livelihood, the empire shall provide appropriate levels of compensations, and to the families of those who have already perished, the victims’ bodies shall be returned with sufficient support to carry out respectful funeral services.”

Of course, the responsibility of treating black magic fell on Ian. That was because Ian was the only one human being, who could wield the ‘great cancellation’ magic.

“However, the rightful punishment for the high sorcerer, priestess Helene, who had sought the crowned prince’s life, shall be determined in a different way than those of other victims’ perpetrators. Although it wasn’t out of her own volition, the gravity of the nature of her crime, in the assassination plot against the crowned prince, cannot be overlooked. As such, I sentence the high sorcerer, priestess Helene, to indefinite confinement.”

The emperor handed down a logical decision. Hasn’t the tower lord’s death sentencing been already decided on? If the high ranking sorcerers were to be executed under the current environment, it will bring about great loss to the national power. The neighboring kingdoms will certainly keep their eyes on it.

“Of course, the possibilities for the recent dispositions to become, either lax or worsen, always exist. I instruct you to convey that message to the offenders.”

Sorcerer is the most useful weapon or tool. There is no doubt in that when one is a 4th class level sorcerer. Simply by keeping her alive brings security and benefits in many ways. The emperor’s decision was the right one.

“Finally, appropriate rewards for the two heroes in this incidence cannot be skipped.”

There was a touch of pleasure in the emperor’s continence as he discussed the rewards. The two ‘heroes’ were not only loyal, but were handpicked by the emperor, himself.

“Ian Page, who has utterly prevented the former tower lord, Herbert Leon’s scheme, and Oliver Raywood, who has valiantly stopped the high sorcerer, priestess Helene’s assassination attempt of the crowned prince, do come forward.”

Upon hearing the emperor's words, Oliver Raywood, the captain of the 2nd royal knights, stepped on to the red carpet in a formal attire of an armor suit, a helmet and even donning a cape. However, Ian was nowhere to be seen.

"Do approach."

Although the loyal colleagues of great and small stature were uneasy at Ian being missing, the emperor simply told Oliver to approach. Rather, as a matter of fact, he recited out loud as if to calm the crowd.

"Ian Page is currently investigating the matters concerning black magic. His rewards will be decided at a separate time when all the situations come to a close. For now, let us focus our attention to Capt. Oliver, who had protected the crowned prince from none other than a 4th class mage."

Finally, everyone's attention was given to Oliver.

Of course, there wasn't even a slight show of nervousness in Oliver.

"This is certainly a time of blessing and celebration for this empire. Not only is the crowned prince safe, but a knight, who has overcome the humanly limitations, was born to our empire today, isn't it? He shall be a great exemplary knight, not only in our empire, but to all the knights and all the great many swordsmen throughout this world."

The loyal colleagues nodded in agreement. They were just curious about Ian, who was missing, but they certainly had high levels of interests in Oliver. A knight has defeated a mage, a high 4th class mage, at that.

"I shall never let Oliver Raywood's valiance and accomplishments pass by unrecognized. I have delivered much consideration on how best to reward him. There was only one way. A knight must be a knight."

Emperor Terry paused for a moment.

Then he continued slowly.

"From henceforth, I am pleased to declare Oliver Raywood, the captain of the 2nd royal knights, to the title of 'Master Swordsman', who could oversee all the knights in my

kingdom and to be forever remembered as the most revered knight of all.”

The loyal colleagues were stirred at that statement. Only those high ranking officials, who were privy to this consideration, remained silent. It was certainly an honorary title that existed in the empire’s history. However, to find someone, who had been actually named to this title, would require tracing the empire’s history back for many hundreds of years.

“I also understand it. What it means to be named the master swordsman. But, is it not sufficient? What was the reason behind for no longer having a master swordsman in the first place? It’s because of sorcery that the honor of the sword has fallen to the ground.”

The emperor spoke softly as if he was already anticipating the reactions from the multitudes of the loyal colleagues and high ranking officials. As a knight, it may be uncomfortable to hear, but nonetheless, it was a reality.

“However, Oliver Raywood came out through that great shadow. He has stayed loyal to the crowned prince for a long time, and will continue to do so going forward. Besides, he had overpowered a 4th class sorcerer. Such level of capability and loyalty could certainly be considered as being near perfect, however, if any opposing views exist, do speak.”

The emperor’s words were appropriate. Oliver certainly had overwhelming credentials. This is the age of magic. It was no longer possible for knights to be planning a revolt as it had been possible very long time ago. As the title would indicate, it was only an honorary position.

“It appears that there is none.”

The emperor nodded in response to the loyal colleagues’ reactions. He didn’t show it, but the emperor was exhilarated. There will be two great pillars, Ian, who will soon target the Ivory Tower lord, and Oliver, who will be named the master swordsman, to protect the crowned prince.

“Kneel, Oliver Raywood, a royal knight.”

The emperor stepped down from the throne. Drawing his sword, he placed it on top of one of the shoulders of Oliver, who was kneeling. It was similar to when a monarch

would bestow the honor of knighthood.

“As the first branch of the Emerald River, I command the name of ‘master swordsman’ and all of its honors to be bestowed on knight, Oliver Raywood. Are you prepared to carry on the duties of a master swordsman that has been in void for the past hundreds of years?”

In dignifying fashion, the emperor Terry posed the questions.

Oliver spoke in subdued baritone.

“My lord, I shall put my life on this great honor.”

It was a short, but strong commitment.

There wasn’t even any contrived humility.

Rather, he was full of self-confidence.

That was Oliver Raywood, the ‘Green River’s Master Swordsman’.



On the third day before the former Ivory Tower lord, Herbert Leon’s execution, Ian was in the dungeon that had been the tower lord’s laboratory for black magic as well as the secret storage space, which was located past the portal created by the book.

‘Trophies.’

The tower lord’s items of personal wealth were still kept there. He didn’t hide them on purpose. Rather, Ian had reported to the emperor about the tower lord’s personal assets. Despite that, there was only one reason that they continued to remain there securely.

‘All these are your trophies, Ian. Whether to keep, return to the kingdom as the kingdom’s wealth, or send back to the Ivory Tower, the choice is yours.’

This was the emperor’s rewards given to him in private. It was also a test at the same time. How will such great wealth be disposed by Ian, was what the emperor wanted

to see. Even if the whole thing was returned to the kingdom as part of its wealth, reverted back to the Ivory Tower, or kept, it was certain that none of these actions would earn him high marks.

‘This is becoming an annoyance.’

Initially, Ian only wanted to keep a few artifacts and the book of portal. The wealth was already overflowing. Any sorcery items with effective levels below that of the artifacts only become hindrances. So, he just wanted to keep those that he needed and pass the rest of them on, be it to the Ivory Tower or to the imperial family.

‘Well, I suppose they will someday become useful in my possession.’

What’s good is good, I suppose? The more money there is the better, and artifacts or sorcery items will eventually become useful someday in my possession. There is no longer the annoying need to hide or how to dispose them.

“Let’s leave them as they are presently.”

He had intended to keep the tower lord’s personal assets here for now. As long as there was the portal, it was as simple as going in and out of his own house, so there was no need to move them to his residence.

‘I need to verify it first.’

It wasn’t for the trophies that he entered here through the portal. Rather, he wanted to satisfy his own basic curiosity. The center of his curiosity was none other than the ‘book of portal’. That book artifact was his concern.

‘The portal doesn’t make any sense no matter how hard it was reasoned.’

During his time between this life and the previous life, Ian has not only familiarized, but has also used many mythical and very powerful artifacts. However, hearing about the book of portal was a surprise. He didn’t even believe that such artifacts existed. The reason was simple.

‘Portal is an 8th class level sorcery.’

To put it precisely, this was a magic that Ian could have finally used after reaching the

8th class status. It was possible to newly create the technique through research and reading ancient books, however, materializing it will require 8th class level mana and production capability.

‘This was the 8th class level sorcery.’

Even Ian did not know the production method or the origin of the artifact. He only knew the power of the artifact. They have comparable powers of the ‘mana brain’.

‘Inscribe into the artifact, and even trigger it?’

If an interaction occurs with the inscribed technique, simply injecting mana will initiate the technique, being processed, to activate the magic. In fact, it will even transform its effects to become more enhanced. It is similar to the fly spell that had been transformed by ‘Michel Greenriver Rove’.

‘At any rate, who has created it?’

As any other artifacts would be, he was certain about this book. It was not an item created by mankind. Of course, it wasn’t like that of the god’s move like the Fairy Queen’s. It is by from those who were on much higher plains.

‘Dragon, or something beyond that.’

Therefore, Ian grew curious.

A place that would have been bridged by some transcendental entity.

On the surface, a place that may look like this dungeon.

Where was the exact location?

Is it someplace that is connected to this continent?

‘It was not a place that the tower lord had bridged.’

This dungeon has always been affixed as the other side of the portal. There was a method with which to alter the bridged location, but with the limited knowledge of Ian, it was not possible. The tower lord was probably in the same boat. Thus, the

possibility of it being the predetermined location was high.

‘It doesn’t appear to be 3rd dimensional.’

That is, a ‘3rd dimensional’ space, maybe inner pocket space for the friendly force. However, it didn’t appear to be such a space. It was too realistic to be that. Wasn’t it like a dungeon designed to be a hiding place?

‘There is no way to go out to begin with.’

It was a spacious rectangular room, without any exits. After many days of observation, just like the old Ivory Tower’s basement, there were not any hidden passages.

“Hmm...”

Ian surveyed the surroundings for a while.

He scratched his cheek lightly.

‘Nothing can be done?’

It appeared as if there wasn’t any other means.

Other than ‘brute force methods’, he thought.

‘Smash through his way out seemed to be the only way.’

Smash and push through, using magic.

Until when? Until the outside world comes into view.

It was such a simplistic method.

At least, it was to Ian.

It was a possible method only for the 6th class level sorcerers.

Kwang!

Ian no longer hesitated.

He moved to action as soon as his mind was set.

Kwang! Kwang! Kwaang!

The dungeon, beyond the portal, was wildly shaken up with such destructive power of sorcery. A passage has opened after cracking and smashing. However, the end of the passage was not in sight. It didn't appear to be a manageable depth with simple one or two magic.

'It will take longer than anticipated.'

As if determined, Ian took a dose of Douglas' Harp elixir. He even brought artifacts from the tower lord's personal assets to enhance the effectiveness. He was certainly fully prepared.

Kwaaang! Kwang! Kwa-Kwang!

Pzzzzz...

Kwang! Kwang-Kwang! Kwaaang!

Pzzzzzzz...

How long has it been since he began tunneling through?

Beyond the engulfing and diffused dust and stones.

Beyond that, there began to appear a point of light.

'Is it outside?'

No matter what, Ian was a sorcerer after all.

His curiosity wasn't easily explainable.

A sorcerer's unique curiosity has kicked in.

What would lie beyond that point?

Kwaaang!

Finally, a full beam of light has welcomed Ian.

Chapter 68

Dark Veil (2)

‘What is this place...?’

After diagonally tunneling through, the outside was reached.

To his surprise, it appeared completely different than what he had imagined.

It was nothing, but a wide open ‘flat’ prairie land.

Nothing, but a wide prairie filled with only grass.

There were cliffs all around.

Has the earth been risen up?

‘No, wait.’

It wasn’t risen up.

It was floating in the air in the first place.

That is, a piece of earth was ‘levitating’ in the air.

A bundle of clouds nearby has assured him.

It was a ‘levitating’ earth that has never been heard or seen before.

What is this place?

‘A human?’

Ian has recovered from confusion.

He located someone in the distance.

A man was sitting at the edge of a cliff.

At a quick glance, it appeared to be a human being.

He was sitting in a very precarious way.

‘What is that?’

Ian felt somewhat confused. He came to this place chasing after his curiosity and feeling that something would be here. But, he has discovered stranger things that were beyond expectations. A wide, levitating prairie that was as high as to reach the clouds and even an unidentifiable human being.

‘This definitely looked suspicious.’

He thought it to be suspicious.

As that would be the normal expected reaction.

However, his mind wasn’t having such a feeling at all.

Although it was hard to explain, he felt at peace.

With the entire landscape that came into his view,

And even that person, too.

‘Is it witchcraft?’

There was a high probability that that’s what it would be. No, he was certain.

The problem was that even though he believed it to be witchcraft for certain, he wasn’t able to overcome it. Ian doesn’t easily get tricked by witchcraft. At least, once he detects witchcraft, he was always able to overcome it. However,

‘He can’t feel it.’

The power of witchcraft could not be detected.

It can only be overcome if there were physical evidences.

There would be only two reasons in such a case.

It wasn't the effect of witchcraft to begin with

Or

'The sorcerer is much stronger than me.'

Ian is a 6th class mage.

He even possesses the knowledge of the 8th class.

No one would have stronger sorcery abilities than Ian. At least there will be no one among the human beings.

'If this was an effect of witchcraft,' then there was only one answer. The man that was still sitting on the edge of the cliff with his back showing, the 'one who appears to be a human being', that man must be the sorcerer of this witchcraft.

'At a minimal, he would be comparable to my former self.'

It had to be someone like the former Ian, that is, someone equivalent to an 8th class mage or with unlimited possibility of being greater than that. That would be the only way to totally deceive Ian like this.

'What if he was hostile towards me...'

There was nowhere to run to.

It would mean a gamble for life in order to escape from that person.

Gulp!

Unconsciously, Ian swallowed his dry mouth. It was an unusual physical reaction for him in his entire life, including his previous one. Excluding the naïve years of his life,

it might have been the first time.

“Please allow me to ask some questions.”

Ian spoke as he approached closer to the person, sitting on the edge. Of course, he maintained some distance. As his voice was amplified by melted mana, he could be easily heard at that distance.

“Where am I? And who are you.”

Friend or foe.

Or neither.

What this entity wanted at this moment.

He needed to find out its true identity.

Only then he could take appropriate action.

No, even before that,

‘Curious.’

Ian was confident.

Ian, in his former life, was unmatched.

Even now, he has enormous power.

But, someone that was stronger than him has appeared.

Not by a little, but by a mile.

What was his identity anyway?

It could not possibly be a human being.

‘Dragon?’

That would be the most likely candidate.

From the book of the dragons to the power of descendants,

Weren't there a lot of nexuses?

'The first sorcerer?'

That was the unique 'concept' that Ian had adapted in this life.

That possibility was also overwhelming.

As this entity's existence was for real.

'A god?'

Ian does not believe in gods.

Despite that, he thought of it as a possibility.

If not a dragon, nor the first sorcerer,

Wouldn't the answer lie above that then?

"..."

The man did not respond. He just sat there with his back against Ian. Was it because it looked so serene? Several features of the man's appearance caught Ian's eyes.

'The color of his hair is same as mine.'

The long, flowing, light brown hair,

It's not regal, but certainly not very common either.

He even had on a worn robe.

Rather, it looked to be just a piece of straw mat.

“I will ask again...”

[Rumbatts.]

Ian subconsciously hesitated at that moment as a voice came, flowing out of that entity.

‘Dragon speech...?’

The sound wasn’t originating from the vocal cords.

It was not a sound to be heard by ears either.

It was the contentious echoing sound of mana and the mind.

He was certain that it was the unique characteristic of the speech of the dragon.

[Spellggia.]

The entity continued to speak.

It was the same language as the dragon’s speech.

Only that it didn’t appear to be the dragon speech magic.

Perhaps, it was the dragons’ ‘every-day words’?

[Rah-drakoshy.]

It was a phrase made up of only three words.

Yet, Ian wasn’t able to interpret them.

Except the last phrase ‘Rah-drakoshy’.

‘Drakoshy, dragon. Rah-drakoshy, the dragon.’

The problem was with the two preceding words.

Rumbatts, and Spellggia.

What the heck do they mean?

Do what to the 'dragon'?

'Rumbatts Spellggia Rah-drakonishy.'

As thought, it wasn't the dragon speech magic.

Rather, it was a daily language of the dragons.

It seemed that he wanted to communicate something.

"I understand a little bit of dragon words, but not necessarily that well. If possible, could you speak in another language..."

[Rumbatts, Spellggia, Ra-drakonishy.]

The entity that speaks the language of the dragons recited as if to emphasize something. Rumbatts, Spellggia, Ra-drakoshy. Unconsciously, Ian repeated those words in his mind.

"... Uh?"

It was right at that moment.

The world began to crumble, the sky, the clouds, and the levitating earth, even the man with the light-brown hair.

Ian's hands, feet, and his body as well.

As if the space in a world of illusion was disappearing.

'What the hell... '

At the same time, Ian's eyes were gently closing.

It was hard to resist, rather just trying to keep it open was difficult.

He couldn't understand it even as he was closing his eye.

Such helplessness has never been felt before.

After all, it was none other than Ian himself.

How powerful is he?

That entity?

'Who...'

He was curious as to the entity's identity 'til the end.

The entity that speaks the language of the dragons.

Could it be one of the dragons as expected?

'...?'

Just before losing his consciousness, the entity turned around and looked at Ian.

It was a middle aged looking man's face with full of wrinkles.

A thought came to his mind as a result although it did not fit the situation at hand.

'What an ugly...'

This was the thought that came to Ian's unconscious mind.

Finally, Ian lost his consciousness.

It was the world of unconsciousness filled with sheer darkness.

How long has he been wandering about?

(What is it??)

It was a very familiar voice.

It was the voice of the Fairy Queen.

(Why are you like this?)

That sound of voice thundered explosively inside Ian's head.

(Human! Could it be that you are dead?)

Ian opened his eyes slowly.

Then he surveyed the surroundings as his eyes were opened.

He was no longer in the prairie of the levitating earth.

Dungeon, he saw the dungeon beyond the portal.

"Aaak!"

Ian wrapped his head in his hands.

Tremendous headache suddenly came upon him.

'Was it a... dream?'

No, no matter how much he struggled, it didn't appear to be a dream. Could a dream be that vivid? It was certainly a magic and reality. If it wasn't real, there wouldn't be such a throbbing headache.

(What were you doing anyway? Your mother kept bothering me, panicking to find out what's happened to you, and you wouldn't show up. I was so irritated that I had to come by!)

Ian opened the portal from the bedroom.

The door was locked of course, and there was not a key.

There was only the Fairy Queen in the room.

Perhaps, it was all in preparation for an unknown event.

“... How long have I been? Here?”

(It must have been over half a day in human time.)

Ian couldn't do anything, but be in bewilderment.

A half a day, not one hour or two?

He didn't think it had been that long.

(Alright, hurry and go outside lest your mother may break down the door at any moment.)

Ian did not hear the Fairy Queen. Instead, he surveyed the surroundings after initiating a light spell. If it wasn't a dream, he was sure to find the tunnel that he had dug through.

‘Not here?’

But, there was no sign of it at all.

That is, the tunnel that had been dug through the wall.

There wasn't a tunnel, not even any sign of it.

What the heck has happened?

‘No way.’

Ian has begun to calmly organize the situation.

He had taken a half potion of elixir to break through the wall.

That small potion bottle was still inside the pocket of his robe.

It was full as if it had not been touched at all.

‘Really...’

Likewise, the artifacts that he had worn remained on the top of the tower lord’s display panel. As if nothing had happened, as if no one had touched them, they remained there in order.

‘Was it really a dream?’

He felt it to be just so ‘vivid’.

He had an expression on his face, which showed that it was hard to admit that it was a dream.

He just needed to verify it.

(Can you not hear me?)

“Move back.”

(What?)

Kwang!

Once again, Ian began to dig through the wall.

The direction of digging, the magic, they were all the same as before.

Only that he was just faster.

That is, the speed at which he was plowing through.

Kwang! K-Kwang! Kwang!

Pzzzzzzzz...

The depth also felt similar. When he thought that he was about at the same point, he

felt the cold air from outside. He even saw the sky. If anything was different, it was darker than before as half a day has already passed.

Kwang!

Ian hurriedly went out through the tunnel after finally creating a wider opening. To concur with his expectations, prairie must come in to his view. The cloud filled, 'levitating earth', with cliffs all around its edges, that is.

"Certainly...!"

However, the landscape that Ian had expected to see, the cliffs, clouds and the unidentifiable entity, did not exist anywhere.

The place that he saw was only a dark forest.

He only saw a large wall of a castle down in the distance.

The capitol of the empire, it was the wall of the Green Riverdium castle.

It seemed to be located in the middle of a hill outside the imperial capitol.

(What is this sudden blabbering? Have you gone mad?)

The fairy that had followed had yelled at him. He was unconscious just a moment ago. That same bastard has begun to destroy the wall as soon as he was awakened. It was only fitting that he came across as being insane.

"..."

Ian did not say a word.

Instead, he began to indulge in reminiscence of the earlier events.

That is, a recollection that actually could have been a dream.

The dragon words that the entity had spoken of.

'Rumbatts, Spellggia, Rah-drakoshy.'

Then an incredible event occurred. Rather, he felt an awesome enlightenment. The words of the dragon that he couldn't understand earlier, he seemed to be able to interpret them now. What that entity was trying to tell him, he now understood what exactly they meant.

'Rumbatts.'

Never.

'Spellggia.'

Trust not.

'Rah-drakonishy.'

The dragon.

'Rumbatts Spellggia Rah-drakonishy.'

Never trust the dragon.



Floop!

Ian has returned to his residency. After having assured his family, he stayed in for three whole days, flipping through the pages of the book of the dragons. He had temporarily halted all the planned activities and work.

That's what he had to do.

Floop! Floop!

The more he had turned the pages of the book, the more certain he had become. That is, the levitating earth, unfamiliar entity, all of which were not part of a dream. That was only natural. He has become notably knowledgeable. He progressed from being able to only read the words of the unknown language of the dragons, to having the knowledge of being able to see and interpret the meanings.

‘He still couldn’t understand even 3% of it.’

How much of the dragon’s language can be understood.

It was not something that he needed to wrestle with.

‘I have not done a thing.’

He did not pay for it.

That’s how he certainly felt at this very moment.

There was not even a research done beyond that.

The last research that he had conducted had been several months ago.

However, this transformation has occurred.

Learning the reason was more important than anything.

‘Why the heck?’

There was no answer to it no matter how hard he tried.

It was an issue that was beyond Ian’s common sense.

Those are, the entity, the levitating earth, and the language of the dragons.

Only that, there existed one common linkage.

‘Dragon.’

From the book of the dragon language to the power of the descendants, and the events that had occurred three days ago were all closely related to the dragon.

‘But then, trust not? The dragon?’

The language of the dragon, ‘Dragon language’ has been attained. The dragon’s power

of the 'Descendant' has also been gained. Was that all? The entity, appearing to be the dragon came face to face with him. But, do not trust that dragon?

"Hmmm..."

Ian fell in deep thoughts for a moment.

Then he shut closed the book of the language of the dragon.

Wasn't it a heavy book?

Closing it lightly would have also accompanied loud noises.

'Let me think later. Later.'

Despite the fact that he had halted all the planned activities and work, there was still something that he had to do today. He had to observe the public execution of Herbert Leon, the Ivory Tower's tower lord. It wasn't something that he looked forward to do, but as the emperor was planned to be there, he couldn't not go.

'Perhaps, this will be the starting line.'

Ian has brought about so many changes in the past 5 years. His mother was still alive, Douglas has become a friend, expeditious rise to the high ranking sorcerer, the change in the crowned prince's position, and the growth of Oliver, etc. If possible, he had believed that it would have been best to just go with the anticipated flow, but his life has turned to a different tune.

'The execution of the tower lord.'

However, nothing will compare to the significance of today's event. That's how Ian had concluded. The tower lord of the Ivory Tower, who is the 5th prince, Ragnard's largest supporter and leader of a nation, is going to be executed.

The implication is that Herbert Leon, who has survived for a very long time in his past life and was being remembered as the great tower lord of the Ivory Tower, is to be faded away at a different time in a very different fashion.

'The true beginning.'

Standing at the end of it, Ian adjusted his robe.

Collecting the staff that was hanging, he rose from his seat.

Chapter 69

The Execution (1)

“O king, my father! This is highly an inappropriate measure in any imagination. Do you intent on proceeding with the execution of the tower lord of the state of the Ivory Tower? I beg of you to please reconsider. Do you not see the loss it will bring to the empire?”

It was the 5th prince Ragnar, who was 19 years of age.

He made impassioned pleas over and over to Terry Greenriver, the emperor.

The verbal debate has been going on for several days already.

“The tower lord is a 5th class grand sorcerer. Executing him would be similar to killing tens and thousands of soldiers. No, it will be a much more serious mistake. Yes, a serious mistake!”

Ragnar desperately wanted to prevent the execution of the tower lord as the tower lord was his only ally. Fortunately, the tower lord had the ability and a reason to escape the execution. Ragnar believed that it would work if he was to persistently argue those points.

“The news of the execution will spread quickly, via the state’s media, throughout the nations as soon as the execution is carried out. Coldwood, who diligently sought our borders for a long time! Once the great prairie concedes, a path will open even to the principality of Roe! Since the most powerful sorcerer has died, since the affairs of the state became so chaotic, it will be told that the best time to carry out any plans to take any action would be right now!”

State’s power, the state, war, losses.

These were the reasons behind Ragnar’s argument. Execute the most powerful 5th class mage? That was inconceivable. It can’t ever happen! That was what was being appealed.

“He is not the most powerful sorcerer.”

The emperor cited quietly after listening for a long while.

“Isn’t the most powerful sorcerer of the Ivory Tower, Ian Page, who was the first to reach the 6th class level, in the history of man?”

That was true. There was a serious flaw in Ragnar’s argument. The tower lord was no longer the most powerful force within the empire. Hasn’t Ian Page, who is enormously stronger and will continue to get stronger, appeared as the newest force in the Greenriver Empire?

“He will soon replace the tower lord’s position. Then there shall not be any problems. No, I dare to say that the Ivory Tower will soon welcome its new golden age. Do you disagree? Pray tell me.”

Ragnar spoke immediately after hearing that question.

It did not take him even three seconds to formulate his response.

“Yes, of course. Ian Page will open a new age as the new power of the Ivory Tower from now on. However, the tower lord is also a sorcerer with decades of experience and the skills that are as powerful as Ian’s. If he was to live, and leads the Ivory Tower, together with Ian Page, the empire will soon stand as the **loser** of the continent.”

It was certainly not a wrong assumption. The combined tactical, strategic values of a 6th class and a 5th class sorcerers would truly be immense.

“That’s not all. The Ivory Tower will be divided into two parts between the young and capable sorcerer and the old, experienced one. What does that imply? They will contain each other.

It implies that our imperial family’s duty and the responsibility of containing the Ivory Tower will be performed within the Ivory Tower itself. How ideal would that situation be?”

That, too, was a right assessment.

Even the emperor nodded his head in agreement.

“You are correct.”

“Then...!”

“However,”

Despite agreeing to Ragnar’s point, the emperor’s mind was made up.

The tower lord has a major flaw.

“The tower lord studied black magic. If he had only studied it in passing, I may have reconsidered it... No. No. You are right. He, just being himself, a sorcerer, brings benefits to the state. If you have requested the rights to life or death to vile criminals, I may have accepted your pleas.”

The emperor finally showed his true intentions.

What would have been done, had the tower lord requested that he needed to study black magic for the security of the state, so could you turn a blind eye or that he wanted to use atrocious criminals as sacrifices for black magic, so could you turn a blind eye? There would have been a high probability that such request would have been granted as the emperor’s first priority was the security of the state.

“However, the tower lord’s actions had crossed the line. Rather, he had gone mad for certain. He used multitudes of innocent lives of the citizens and fellow sorcerers of noble standing as sacrifices. It was told that he had done this for a very long time without a single minute of hesitation.”

“That is...!”

“For the benefit of the state? Security of the state? Power of the state? No, none of them were what the tower lord had desired. The only purpose was to place Ian Page under his control. That was the only way to place a strong grasp on the Ivory Tower. Is that not so?”

Ragnar has lost for words right at that moment. He knew that it was a clear truth and a heavy crime that cannot be forgiven. Despite that fact, Ragnar had to dig deep and find it. That is, the words that he could say, the reason that could save the tower lord.

“But the tower lord has greater stature than that of a great feudal lord. He is in the

position that is as good as the 2nd to the throne of the empire. How can he be executed just for harming those peasants that are of humble standings? Would you execute an imperial family member just because he has killed a servant girl? Would you execute a nobleman because he has killed a lowly peasant?"

It was Ragnar's argument that had completely missed the mark.

His argument lacked 'guidance'.

It is because the situation has turned grave.

"Ragnar, that is your problem."

"... Sir?"

"That is the reason that I cannot choose you as my successor."

With this sudden revelation, Ragnar became dumb as if a cat got his tongue. We are talking about the tower lord right now. However, why the sudden implication of succession?

"Ragnar, I know of your thoughts, know of your ambition, and know of your nature. You are indeed intelligent and smart. You have a great political sense and even have the force to draw people to you. I know better than anyone, why the multitudes refer you as a saint fit for a king."

This was surely a compliment.

That is, as good a compliment as that which cannot be matched.

It was as if he was being showered with gold dust.

However, Ragnar had failed to smile.

He knew that it was not a compliment.

"There is one most important thing that you lack. I assume that you know it very well yourself. You hide that blemish very well, but fail to keep it hidden when pressure critically builds up. Just like now."

That was Ragnar's deathly flaw.

That was none other than the 'loss of emotions'. The concept of 'conscience' did not exist with Ragnar. He lacked compassion for those poor souls, and he treats every human being as a 'tool' to be used for his own success. The emperor knew and assessed Ragnar's nature very accurately. He has been for a very long time.

"Of course, it is possible to have your flaws appear as strengths. As there will be many important matters to deal with, it is necessary for an emperor to address them logically."

"However, then why..."

"Logical decisions can be delegated to a loyal servant."

The emperor continued after a brief pause.

"Loyal servants are tools of the state's affairs. Those, which feed on the people of the state and wield power, are the best ones to be using as tools. However, emperor is not like that. The one that rises to be an emperor is like being a father to the multitudes of citizens. Parents are the only people that can make choices based on emotional burden."

For those matters, requiring logical and cool-headed decisions, an emperor can heed to the opinions of the loyal servants, and even entrust that power to them. However, at the most decisive moment, at which time to take the side of the citizens despite any potential losses to the state, only the emperor can make those choices and it is the emperor's unique right and prerogative.

"..."

Ragnar kept quiet after hearing the emperor's words. He could understand the words and the meaning of what the emperor was saying. He is smart. It is possible that he had already known it as well as understood it.

"Ha Ha..."

He burst in to laughter.

It was a quiet and subdued ridiculing.

“No. I beg to differ.”

“What is that?”

The emperor’s eye brows rose at the impious tone.

“My elder brother was the son, who was born of the womb of the woman that you, o king, my father, loved very much. But what about me! Am I not the son you’ve given birth to in order to attain the powers of the great aristocrats as well? Perhaps, that is the difference!”

“Ragnar!”

“O king, my father, what more excuses do you need? Admit it. You have to admit it. That is the truth, isn’t it?”

Unable to contain his anger, the emperor raised his right hand high. He was about to slap the cheek of Ragnar and in reaction, Ragnar closed his eyes tightly. And he acutely raised the ends of his lips.

“Hah-aaaahh...”

But the emperor’s hand did not move. He just let out grievous sighs through his lips.

“You fool.”

After shaking his head, the emperor left Ragnar’s room. Concurrently, he issued an order to ‘Dimple Moret’, the captain of the first royal knights.

“Dimple, you shall guard Ragnar’s living quarters yourself. Ensure that he does not leave his room. You must ensure that no one makes contact with him. Have you understood my orders?”

Upon receiving that order, Moret took on the knight’s manner. There was an aura of an old knight’s strong will, cultivated by decades of tough experiences.

“Your order is my command.”



The scheduled public execution of Herbert Leon, the tower lord of the Ivory Tower was at hand.

That important event was going to take place in the central square. The noble family members and the citizens of the imperial city as well as those living nearby came in droves to watch the tower lord's execution.

"Is it true that the man so called the tower lord is actually going to be executed?"

"You know it very well too? You know the Full Moon Inn over there? The Inn's owner's daughter had also been captured by the tower lord! He was studying this bullshit black magic or something and turned people into corpses?"

The gathered crowds numbered over five thousand and in anticipation for some unknown emergencies, Ivory Tower's sorcerers and the knights as well as the imperial army were widely dispatched. Their mission was to provide security details to the royal families, and surveillance as well as control of the crowd.

"Huh, what an insane bastard?"

"What an insane bastard. He is an insane, old bastard."

"But then how were they able to capture that old man? What'd they say... the 5 class? Isn't he the 5 class sorcerer? With that level of sorcery, he would fly high into the sky and can burrow deep down into the ground! Wouldn't he have caused panic and chaos throughout?"

Yet, surveillance and control weren't easy to do. It was because great many more people showed up than had anticipated. To ordinary people, sorcerers are mystic existences. And of such mystic individuals, one of the top dogs is going to be publicly executed. To put it into a context, perhaps, this event would bring about people's interest to the level that will occur only once in several hundred years of the state's history.

"Well, as far as what I've heard, he is the youngest among the high ranking sorcerers..."

"Our boss has captured him!"

A young lad squeezed through a crowd of spectators. It was Douglas, the empire's most talented alchemist, who still called Ian his 'boss'. He also came all the way here to watch the tower lord's execution.

"Our boss is none other than the Duke Ian Page, the youngest high ranking sorcerer! Ah, right now, he is the strongest within the Ivory Tower. I think 6th class is what they said? At any rate, our boss has captured the mad tower lord! He has also saved the people – I'm saying that is what this is all about? Isn't this fantastic?"

As if to be praising himself, Douglas pounded on his own chest hard. It was a show of overflowing self pride.

"Ah..."

"I see."

"Already at such a young age..."

Several people nodded their heads in response to Douglas's round of praises. They have already heard about the rumors regarding the sorcerer named, Ian Page, for a few years. Even if they didn't want to hear or know about the greatness associated with that name, wasn't it an impossible task?

Toooooooooo!

It was at that moment.

The grand sound of the trumpets was heard.

"The emperor shall arrive shortly! Pay your respect to the emperor!"

Mana filled voices of the sorcerers resonated loudly throughout the square. This caused everyone in the boisterous crowd to instantly kneel to the ground. Was that all? The square that was filled with noise, instantly went silent.

"Ye-yaaaah...!"

Impressed at this instantaneous change, Douglas knelt onto his knees. He renewed the

feeling, to the bones, with respect to the power and awesomeness of the emperor's status.

'Our boss would accompany him? Come with the emperor, that is.'

Douglas raised his head up high. He raised his upper body a bit as well in his efforts to see his boss, Ian, who was to make his entrance along the side of the emperor.

Toooooooooo-!

With another sound of the trumpets, a number of people appeared through a separate reserved pathway. The emperor, Terry Greenriver with gray hair, showing his passage into the silver years, the 1st royal knights that provide his security details, and Ian, along with all the high ranking sorcerers of the Ivory Tower appeared.

'Ah! It's the boss!'

The crowned prince, the prince, princess, or the other royal family members weren't there. Only the emperor was to attend the execution of the tower lord among the royals. It was none other than the emperor, who has decided that that would be the way.

"His majesty, the emperor! His royal entrance!"

With the outpouring shouts of the many soldiers and sorcerers, the emperor made his way to the reserved seat. The sorcerers and the knights surrounded him for an impenetrable security wall. It was even more complete with the presence of Ian. Should there be thousands of assassins, going after the emperor, they would not be able to penetrate that security wall.

Boom-! Boom-! Boom-! Boom-! Boom-!

This time, rather than the trumpet sound, a booming sound of the drums was heard, signaling the entrance of the condemned. At the same time, from the passage way from the other side, there appeared Herbert Leon, the tower lord, being pulled and wearing worn prison garment.

"You, you devilish bastard!"

It was at that moment that a spectator shouted as he threw a stone at the tower lord.

It was 'Full Moon Song' Inn's owner, the father of the girl that had been kept in imprisonment as the energy source of the black magic for many years.

"You will see! I will find your corpse and will tear it apart into pieces! As much as my daughter has suffered! A hundred fold! A thousand fold! I will pay you back!"

A father's wrath has aroused the people nearby. Every person picked up a stone and threw at the tower lord. The sorcerers, who were in charge of the safe delivery of the condemned, used shield the magic to only protect the soldiers and themselves, leaving the tower lord exposed to vulnerability.

Puck!

A stone hit smack in the middle of the tower lord's head. He staggered, but did not show any response. No, he couldn't do anything. That's because Ian had made him an imbecile.

"You garbage, bastard!"

"Worse than a dog!"

"Die now!"

As the spectators' anger grew and spread like wildfire, the soldiers and the knights began to subdue them. If it was to lead to a violent demonstration, it will cause an unbearable situation. Therefore, appropriate level of response was warranted.

" ... "

As the first wave of the crowd's anger died down, the tower lord appeared on the platform of the execution stage. The tower lord has received execution order by hanging. It was the sentence chosen after careful considerations of applicability among several execution methods such as poison drink, drowning, and hanging.

"Condemned Herbert Leon's heinous, deplorable crimes see no limit."

Rising from his seat, the emperor, himself, began to detail the tower lord's crimes. It was usually carried out by administrators, but the emperor took that task himself this time. The reasons certainly warranted it, along with the level of wraths that he carried.

“You have forsaken the responsibility of the state as the tower lord of the Ivory Tower and indulged in the evil black magic. In addition, you have cruelly exploited the lives and spirits of the people and the peer sorcerers as its energy source. The gravest crime of the gravest crimes that you have committed cannot be washed away even with your passing! Therefore, I sentence Herbert Leon to death.”

As those words were being spoken, the soldiers held on to the noose.

It was to place it around the tower lord’s neck.

“That name shall be passed down to eternity as the worst evil criminal in the empire’s history, and if there should be any hidden descendants or accomplices in the black magic, I, as the first spring of the Emerald River, declare and swear to find them and uproot their existence.”

The proclamation of the emperor has ended.

The executioner of the tower lord was ready also.

Now, the emperor’s single order, his minute motion of his hand, will signify the end of Herbert Leon, the tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

Along with everything that he had built will end.

“Carry out the sentence!”

Chapter 70

The Execution (2)

As frosty icicles, the imperial order has been issued. The noose around the tower lord's neck was being pulled tightly. With the removal of the floor of the platform, he wasn't able to reach the surface to even stand on his tiptoes as he had been.

"Auk, Auuk! Auuuk!"

The tower lord began to gasp for air as the noose tightened around his neck. Even though he was made an imbecile, the natural instinct for survival did not go away. He couldn't conjure up magic, but his shaking appeared to be gruesomely desperate.

"Auk... Auuuk... Auuuuugh...!"

His eyes were turned red.

Fluids poured out of his nostrils and mouth.

Then his struggles began to slow.

The ember of life was slowly dissipating.

"Auuuuugh..."

It was when he shook his legs for the final time.

Bizarre circumstances began to materialize.

All the spectators' attention was directed to one spot.

And everyone appeared astonished.

"Ah...?"

“What, what is that...?”

“Around the mouth... blood, is it blood? Blood?”

“Doesn’t appear to be so...”

In black color, the dark energy spilled out of the tower lord’s mouth. It was the same situation as when the black magic was sucked out of Marco and many other victims by the ‘great cancellation’ spell.

‘Is it black magic?’

Ian looked onto the tower lord with surprise. Why is it that a perpetrator, rather than a victim, of black magic would release the dark energy?

‘There were two explanations.’

However, the astonishment lasted only for a brief moment.

Ian observed the situation with cool reasoning.

‘Perhaps, the tower lord was also a victim of black magic.’

It was possible that the tower lord was also a victim of black magic. That scenario had already been considered. He had used the ‘great cancellation’ spell on the tower lord a few days ago, but there were not any responses.

‘Perhaps, he had put a black magic spell on himself.’

That would be the most likely scenario of all. If it was something that gets invoked just before death, that would make the most sense. It was the last resort that might have been prepared for a long time. It was quite obvious that something big was about to take place.

“Sir, Sir Ian!”

In response to such unanticipated occurrence, the sorcerers around there looked at Ian. It was because, in the absence of the tower lord at the moment, the final decision maker of the Ivory Tower was Ian, the 6th class mage.

“Prepare a joint barrier!”

At Ian’s command, there gathered 6 high ranking sorcerers, who were near the execution platform. Then they followed up by covering the struggling tower lord with strong mana barrier. As the exterior of the barrier was hard, so would be the inside. Should there be an effort to attack, it will surely prevent it.

‘Self-destruct for example.’

There were many things that could happen such as causing self destruction, invoking epidemic disease spell, witchcraft, and even brainwashing. Ian had to move as well. Standing up from his place, Ian assisted in maintaining and strengthening the joint barrier.

“Auuuk! Auk!”

The dark energy came out of his mouth with only his vocal cord moving, the tower lord was as good as dead. Was that why? It felt even stranger. As it felt strange to Ian, how strange would it have been to the ordinary spectators? Ian took a swooping look around the people’s expressions.

“Hmm.”

The spectators appeared full of astonishment. The tower lord was dying quickly as he struggled in vain. After all, it was already such an awful looking tower lord, and he his vomiting of the dark energy made it worse.

“What the heck...”

“Should, should we be running far away?”

As was with wrath, fear and confusion were being spread quickly. This time, even the knights and the soldiers, who were in charge of managing the crowd, were wrapped in strange fear. The reason was that there was a feeling of something bad was going to happen.

“Krrrrr... Krrrrrrr...”

However, even that fear was short live.

The situation quickly turned for the better.

The tower lord's vomiting has become slowed.

There was no longer outpouring of dark energy.

It was quiet as if nothing had happened.

'Is it the end?'

Ian did not order to stop conjuring the barrier magic. That's because it may be too premature. It was necessary to take some more time to stay vigilant.

"Sir Ian. What, what shall we do?"

"..."

Some time has already passed. Noise began to arise from what has been a very quiet square. Inside the joint barrier, they saw the flaccid body of the tower lord, but nothing strange.

"... We can stop for now."

They stopped the joint barrier spell after Ian's quiet command. No sign of breathing or heartbeats were felt from the tower lord. He was dead. For real! It implied the end of the leader of the Ivory Tower and the 2nd in line to the throne of the empire. It was a very cruel scene, which cannot be compared to his past life.

"What was that thing?"

Many people cheered. However, Ian could not shake off a suspicion. The tower lord had certainly initiated black magic. What in the world was that black magic?

'There was no way that it was nothing.'

As Ian's concern continued, the former tower lord of the Ivory Tower, Herbert Leon's public execution eventually came to an end. No notable event took place until the end

and most people have written off the dark energy as something of the black magic's 'impurities'. As the fluids discharged from the tower lord's mouth and nostrils with the tightening of the noose, people thought the dark energy has been simply squeezed out of him.



"Is it, is it really OK to do this?"

"Gosh, yes, it is?"

"But still, he is of high stature..."

It was in the same evening, near the hill of the imperial city.

There appeared four imperial military men.

"He was a high ranked person, so? Isn't he dead?"

"But..."

"Did you not volunteer, knowing that?"

"I was temporarily assigned for one day..."

"Aha! Is that why you are talking nonsense?"

They were the imperial soldiers, a designated team that usually takes care of the 'body of the condemned' afterwards. Their duty was to collect the corpses of the condemned and either burn or bury them in the near hill, although they did not always carry it out by the book. The reason was simple.

"Well, is it always like that?"

"Always like that, we've all volunteered to come."

"What...?"

"Isn't this fun? Most of the time, it usually involves someone that is totally worthless,

but sometimes we get a big fish like this one. Those that croak after living with stiff-necked pride or as you've put it, those people of high stature that have croaked.

On the surface, it may appear that no one would ever volunteer unless forced to do so. However, the rate of volunteering to be a member of the designated 'after execution' clean up team wasn't necessarily that low either.

"There is that pleasure of playing with the fat corpses' body parts like using them for fish lure or feed them to the wild animals. There are so many things to do. Hehe."

The middle aged leader of the team said invidiously. The other soldiers also smiled wickedly. The newbie that claimed to have been temporarily assigned to this work was the only one to shrink his shoulders and looked unsure.

"Well, today is a special day alright. It's not just a random noble, but the tower lord? At what other times would I get to see the face of the tower lord of the Ivory Tower, huh?"

As he looked down into the wagon at the face of the tower lord of the Ivory Tower, the middle aged soldier suddenly spat and giggled.

"And when could I be able to spit on him!"

"Haha! That's right. The opportunity doesn't come easy."

"I wish for a member of the royal family to be executed too."

"A royal family member? That would be good. While we are at it, let it be a princess!"

"You know, that one princess that was known for her beauty? What was her name?"

The newbie soldier was there among the lunatic soldiers. They've all come to the nearby hill. The forest under the torch was nothing, but complete darkness. However, they had no problem finding their way. Although they were not normal, they were also veterans at this.

"OK. This would be a good place."

"What, what are you getting at?"

“Stay back. You can just watch.”

Ignoring the newbie soldier’s curiosity, the others kept moving. First, removing the corpse from the straw mat, they set the corpse on to the dirt ground. The tower lord’s corpse wasn’t even drained of blood.

Chuung!

Then they began to desecrate the corpse with the ends of their iron swords. Was that all? They even burned the corpse with the torch, causing permeating stench of the burning body. Instantaneously, the smell of the blood and burning corpse spread throughout the area. It will certainly stimulate the hungry wild beasts’ senses of smell and appetites.

“These wild beasts deserve to indulge in high class delicacy once in a while. They can’t always be filling up on back alley garbage, right? It appears to be tough due to old age, but it will certainly be different than what they’ve eaten and excreted before”

They had no intention of following the books with respect to either burning or burying the tower lord’s corpse. Besides, there were unlimited number of ‘interesting’ ways to take care of the corpse, but they have settled on feeding it to the ‘hungry wild beasts’ for today.

“I’m jealous. Jealous! They get to gorge on the tower lord.”

“If you are so jealous, feel free to go and join them in the gorging.”

“Kk! Crazy bastard! Stop that crazy nonsense.”

After engaging in jokes and laughter in bad taste for a while, slowly, they wanted to leave the area. It was because the wild animals will soon come in droves. No, they were probably here already and simply watching the soldiers.

“It would have been good to watch them eat.”

“You could also become part of their meal?”

“We’ve no choice. After all, it is the corpse of the tower lord. If we are ever caught, it will be the end of us. The end! We should be satisfied with what we’ve done.”

The soldiers were soothing themselves from the sense of not being able to do more.

How many steps have they taken?

Ssssss...

A slithering energy came out of the tower lord like a serpent. As if it had eyes, it found the soldiers and immediately approached them.

“Uh? What is this?”

Feeling something behind his back, one of the soldiers turned around to look back.

There he saw a slithering black energy on the ground.

Was it because it was dark, evening time? It felt like as if it was a real serpent.

“... Is it a serpent?”

“What? A serpent?”

“On the ground, isn’t it a serpent?”

“Should we catch it and drown it in liquor for drinking?”

“Snake liquor sounds great.”

“You, you always talk about drinking...”

It was right at that moment. The dark energy, in the shape of a serpent, rose in to the sky. Its target was the middle aged soldier’s mouth and instantaneously, it has squeezed into his mouth. The soldier could not resist at all.

“Auk, Auuuk...!”

That sound became his final words. Truly, an astounding event has occurred. Out of the middle aged soldier’s eyes, nostrils, ears, and mouth, came the uprooted life force in a light pink color. And that life force headed towards the tower lord’s corpse that

was lying in the forest ground.

“Ugh... ugh, Aaaaaaak!”

The soldiers ran, screaming, at the site of such an unbelievable happening. It wasn't a moment that either needed or desired any understanding, rather it was a moment meant for running away. That was the only way to live. Only that thought was engulfing the five senses of the soldiers.

“Help...!”

However, the dark energy moved much quicker than the running soldiers. After taking the first life, the second life, and the third life sources, it has finally begun to move. What moved?

“Krrr, Krrrrrr...”

It was the tower lord's corpse.

It did not come back to life.

It was too pale to be alive.

Even the two eyes have lost the sense of life.

“Eee, Eeeek!”

Out of the four, only one has survived. It was the newbie soldier that came out on temporary duty, who stood there frozen after looking back. The corpse of the dead tower lord has moved. Even worse, it was looking right at him.

“Ugh... Uh...?”

It was a moment of unrest between reason and the all of his senses.

That was the reason for his inability to move.

It was not black magic, nor magic.

“How dare, how dare to execute me?”

The tower lord looked down on his own shaking hands as he murmured. He even touched the noose marks that were made around his neck. And he was no longer pale.

He was reborn as ‘undead’ and all of his memories were restored.

“You will certainly regret!”

The tower lord has turned into an undead.

He approached the soldier in fear.

He wanted to take the remaining life source.

“Definitely... Definitely...! Krrr, Krrrrrr!”

“Turn.”

“Krrrrrraaa...!”

“Undead.”

“Hah...?”

The tower lord has become even more grotesque.

Through that came a familiar voice.

There wasn’t even a chance to respond sensibly.

He did not even finish smiling.

Booooooooo-woooong!

The golden mana that imitated the sun engulfed the tower lord’s body. The biggest reason for the race of the undead to be active in this world was due to the effect of the ‘Turn Undead’ spell.

“You...?”

Having become an undead, the tower lord had encountered ‘Turn Undead’ spell. The brown hair, the black staff, the dark blue robe, the reason behind the execution, it was Ian, who the tower lord despised.

“You, You...!”

The tower lord could not say another word. The turn undead spell is a disaster to the undead. It breaks one’s body into million pieces.

Pang!

Just Like now.

“Son of a bitch.”

Many of the pieces splashed onto Ian as well. Of course, thanks to the ‘clean spell’ that was inscribed into the Michelle Greenriver’s robe, nothing was left stuck.

“Undead? Unbelievable.”

Ian, of course, knew what was happening.

Still, he shook off his robe as he murmured.

And obviously, he showed his displeasure in all this.

“You took it too far.”

He shook his head.

It was as he’s said, Herbert Leon, the former tower lord of the Ivory Tower, had taken it too far.

“Are you alright, sir?”

“Yes? Ah, Yes!”

Ian asked the sole surviving soldier.

As if he came back to his senses, he nodded his head.

“You should have followed the book and burnt him or something.”

“That, that was...”

“Go and report it. I will clean up here before I go.”

“Ah... Ah! Yes. Yes, I will do!”

The soldier quickly ran out of the hill. After looking at the back of the running soldier, Ian has burnt what was remaining. That is, the last remnants of the tower lord, the remains that were just in some shapeless pieces.

Chapter 71

Final Decision (1)

Following the execution of Herbert, the tower lord, Ragnar's confinement sentencing to his sleeping quarters was lifted in time. 'Dumpil Moret', the old knight, who has been commissioned to enforce the confinement order, has entered the room to notify of the lifting.

"My lord, your highness!"

Ragnar's room was extremely dark. Along with having all the curtains closed, light was purposefully blocked off in order to facilitate sleeping by using 'light shutting Mado engineered products'.

"Has the execution been carried out? The tower lord's"

"Yes. It has been carried out."

"I see."

Was it because Ragnar's voice was so heavy... The old knight, Dumpil, was lost for words for the time being. A multitude of emotions were heard through his inner voices- wrath, sense of loss, confusion and even feeling of abandonment. However, missing there was any sense of sadness or sympathy.

"I heard you, please leave."

"Please do not grieve too much."

"Ha-ha... Do not grieve?"

It was an extremely ceremonial expression. Ragnar could only give an empty laughter because he also thought it to be so. However, Dumpil's actions weren't like that. He placed a piece of paper on the top of the table. It was a carefully folded note. He even lit up a candle, so that it could be read.

“What is that?”

Ragnar asked as he grew wary.

The old knight, Dumpil, replied in a quiet voice.

“Then I shall leave now.”

There was not another mention of the note to the end.

After bowing, he simply exited the room.

“..”

Ragnar opened the note after seeing Dumpil leave the room. The content was not that long. None the less, Ragnar kept reading. He read, reread, and read again. The note that Dumpil had left did warrant such an attention.

“Not yet.”

After Ragnar kept regurgitating what the note said for a while, he burned it using the candle fire.

“There was a chance?”

The burning fire illuminated Ragnar’s smile.

It was a smile full of desire than at any time before.



Greenriver Empire carried out focused investigation on the black magic and placed great attention to security. Especially, every individual inside the palace was the subject of the focused investigation. Weren’t they the heart of the empire? The multitudes of servants for starters, the knights as well as the sorcerers of the palace, and even the royal family of the noble bloodlines must all be equally ‘investigated’.

“Pugh...!”

Of course, the person in charge was Ian. As it was the most stringent investigation, it was only appropriate that the most able sorcerer was conducting it. Only that Ian's physical stamina was being challenged.

"Jeez, I should make sure to nurture a brilliant apprentice or something."

Ian murmured as if to complain as he was conducting the investigations on the hundreds of people within the palace, all by himself. That was only logical. Ian was the only sorcerer that was able to wield the 'great cancellation' spell in the first place. He thought of the expression, 'force majeure'.

'Even the Fairy Queen was not too useful.'

That was what he had intended to do. He wanted to utilize the eyes of the Fairy Queen, the eyes that can see magi during this broad investigation. To conclude, it was simply a great failure.

'Magi can be more ambiguous than it was thought to be.'

All that Ian wanted was only one thing, the 'energy of black magic'. However, the 'magi' that the Fairy Queen could see was much more diverse. That is, not just the black magic, but innate evil, immediate murderous thoughts, various diseases, and other similarly negative elements would all be placed in the same bucket as 'magi'. For instance, let's pretend that the Fairy Queen comes face to face with Ragnar, who is full of dark thoughts. It will be obvious that the Fairy Queen would go berserk, claiming that magi is overflowing.

'It will only add confusion to it all.'

Ultimately, there was only one way.

Ian would have to take on the task himself.

'At any rate, it will only be for a short time.'

He could see the end of the prolonged, exhausting investigation into black magic. What remained now were the royal families. From the crowned prince to the princes, concubines and the princesses, once they are investigated, his work will be finished. Ian felt a relief and his mind became calm.

Knock! Knock!

Then he heard knocks on the door.

It was time for the royal family to be investigated.

Ian combined his hair as he responded.

“Please enter.”

Soon the door of the palace guest quarter that was being used as the interrogation room for few days has opened wide. It was the crowned prince, Hayden Greenriver, who entered the room to be the first royal member to be investigated.

“There, Ian!”

“Your Highness, crowned prince.”

As Ian met him extending his courtesy, the crowned prince responded with a smile. He has always smiled whenever he ran into Ian, but the smiling has gotten more purposeful recently.

“I heard you’ve been very busy lately? It is difficult to see you these days.”

“I beg your pardon, my lord.”

“Not something to be pardoned over. I also know why you’ve been so busy. Hence, I came to pay you a visit, in person like this, to be investigated on the black magic and to see you, my boy, as well. They refer to things like this as killing two birds with a single, single, single...”

“It is a single stone, my lord.”

“Ah, right! Killing two birds with a single stone! I was about to think of it. Cough!”

The crowned prince let out an empty cough as he sat into a chair.

He was the same person today as he was 5 years ago.

Although he has gotten much better now as opposed to back then...

‘Wait.’

Ian was observing the never changing appearance of the crowned prince.

Suddenly, a thought passed by in his head.

‘... Could it be?’

The crowned prince was certainly born with a great bloodline.

Although it was a simple memorization, there was a touch of talent as well.

However, how can he permeate the notion of being such a simple person?

Not even being average, but below that?

‘It could be the effect of black magic.’

What if the dullness that the crowned prince had demonstrated so far was the effect of black magic? The possibility was not that low. It was actually much higher. The tower lord had devised many plans to enthrone Ragnar. The crowned prince was clearly an obstacle for his plan. What better and safer way would be there than making him sufficiently dumb?

“My lord, let’s get started.”

There was no reason to dwell on it any longer.

He dove right into the main topic.

It was an issue, warranting a quick examination.

“Already? Well, OK. What do I need to do?”

“My lord, you just need to stay calm. However, you may feel a bit nauseated or get a headache. Please note that it does not mean any problem, so please endure it.”

“It sounds like nothing. Do begin.”

The crowned prince chanted solemnly on purpose.

Ian pointed his staff.

He even felt butterflies in his stomach.

It was the opportunity to discover the truth, the truth that he didn't know about in his past life.

‘Great Cancellation.’

At last, a clear gray light wrapped around the crowned prince. If the crowned prince was indeed under the spell of black magic, he would certainly vomit dark energy like all the other victims.

“Woouuk...!”

The crowned prince began to get sick. Was it the precursor to vomiting dark energy? Or was it just the side effect of the cancellation spell, causing nausea and headache? Ian's eyes shined brightly.

‘Vomit.’

Vomit!

The dark energy!

Vomit the energy of black magic!

Ian murmured internally.

It was as if he was reciting a spell.

“Auuugh, you were right. Feeling headache and nauseated.”

However, Ian's heightened anticipation ended with it, only being a delusion. As if he had skipped breakfast, the crowned prince just kept swallowing back the reverting

stomach acid, but not even a small sign of black magic.

“Pugh! Ptooeey! Augh, is it over? Anything else?”

After washing his mouth with water from a pre-prepared container, the crowned prince stared at Ian. Although he was sickened with nausea, he appeared so innocent and with age, it seemed that the only thing that matured was his appearance.

‘... Was he born, dumb.’

That was right. Unless the black magic was more powerful than the ‘great cancellation’ spell, it was certain that the crowned prince was ‘born a dummy’. Rather than the emperor’s and the queen’s brains, it appears as if he has only inherited their physical attributes, inheriting even the humanly character.

‘What have I expected... ’

Although he was full of anticipation for a while, Ian was now feeling stupid. He even thought tired due to non-stopping investigation. That must be true. Otherwise, how could he have been this delusional.

“Yes, there is not any problem, my lord.”

Ian answered, firming up his belief.

Should he not finish the work that he’s started?

“I’m relieved. I mean, it should be obvious after all. I shouldn’t even have any time to be mocked by black magic? I have two pillars, Oliver, the master swordsman and you, who will soon be the tower lord of the Ivory Tower. Ha-ha!”

The crowned prince, Hayden, was making idle remarks.

Then he stood up as he tapped Ian’s shoulder.

“Carry on then. We shall see again, later.”

He left the room immediately. In normal times, he would have kept talking, but it seemed as if though he grew some sensibility. He even saw the exhaustion in Ian’s

continence and that he still had work to do.

‘Well, that is more fitting, I suppose.’

Ian thought after observing Hayden. He has certainly changed for sure. Although the change came about slowly at the pace of a turtle, the crowned prince certainly improved and even tried to improve himself.

‘Sudden change would be a strange thing, anyway.’

For instance, imagine the crowned prince changing like Ragnar. Wouldn’t that be a bigger problem? The current situation is much better. It is truly much better.

Knock! Knock!

As Ian was finishing his thoughts on the crowned prince, another knock came at the door. There were still a lot of royal family members that needed to be investigated. There was a long way to go still.

“Please enter.”

The next royal family member that came in after the crowned prince was a familiar face to Ian. It was none other than the sister of the crowned prince, the princess, ‘Hailey Greenriver’, who is known for her beauty.

“It has been a while, sir. Ian.”

It was the princess, Hailey, who was already known for her beauty in her past life. It has been a while since he met her last, face to face. As the crowned prince’s physical appearance has been maturing, so has Hailey’s, who has turned twenty this year.

‘These siblings are such...’

It was not enough for the crowned prince and the princess to have inherited outstanding physiques, but that they even improved upon it. Their beauty matched that of the Fairy Queen that turned into a woman. However, ambiences were the only difference. If the Fairy Queen represents physical and seductive beauty, the princess

Hailey represented innocence itself.

“Your Highness, my princess. How have you been doing?”

“It was all due to your concern that I’ve been doing well.”

The princess’ words weren’t empty at all. From pretending to not see her as a sorcerer to leading her brother, the crowned prince, to the right path, and rescuing multitudes of people from the terrible black magic of the tower lord... As an individual and as a princess of a sovereign nation, she was widely viewed as being justifiably good.

“I am glad. Please take a seat.”

With a smile, Ian led her to a chair.

Ian knew that by simply looking into her eyes, she seemed to want to talk about something.

Investigation is only a means to a conversation.

Was it because her mind was read by Ian?

The princess Hailey’s cheeks turned rosy.

“Silence.”

It was the ‘silence’ spell that cuts off all noise from around and even prevents any sound from traveling outward. The princess Hailey has put the 2nd class spell by herself.

“Have you reached the 2nd class, my princess?”

“Well, actually...”

She opened her hand bashfully.

He counted total of 3 open fingers.

Not two, but three.

“The 3rd class?”

“My, my teacher told me so...”

She was referring to ‘Kevin’, who was the 1st class sorcerer of the palace and her teacher. Although he was a 1st class, he was well learned and as a formal sorcerer, he was able to view the Ivory Tower’s information. In other words, he had clear view and understanding of how classes are categorized.

“Congratulations. I have not imagined it to be that far.”

Ian was truthful. The 3rd class implies rather a high level, even among the sorcerers. Also, did not the princess learn in secret and start the training late? However, all of a sudden, she is a 3rd class sorcerer?

‘Perhaps, she had well endowed talent?’

Ian’s original assessment that she wouldn’t even reach beyond the 1st class has certainly been way off. No, perhaps, she may go beyond that, although there would be a limit.

“I do not believe that you came to tout about you reaching the 3rd class. What is it that you wanted to discuss?”

Ian asked interlocking both his hands.

“... From now.”

After a brief hesitation, she slowly began to speak.

“From now on, what, what and how should I do...?”

Chapter 72

Final Decision (2)

“From now on, how and what should I do?”

It was somewhat of an out of the blue moon type of question, coming from the princess.

Despite that, Ian did not seem confused.

Instead, he responded with a question in calm manner.

“Please, be more specific.”

“I am not sure where to start from...”

“Then allow me to ask questions first.”

Ian was not an obtuse man. His sensibility and intuition were considered to be outstanding. Having observed the princess Hailey since the past life, Ian could imagine a number of things based on her demeanor.

“Why did you hide it? That you were a sorcerer?”

In fact, he wasn't curious 5 years ago, and certainly not now. He was asking only because the topic came up. He was certain that it had something to do with what she wanted to talk about, whether directly or indirectly.

“That's because...”

Princess Hailey organized her thoughts for a minute.

Letting out a big sigh, she continued.

“... It was a simple matter, initially. I just felt that I would need to follow the rules of the

Ivory Tower once I enter it, even if I did not want to, I thought that I would simply change accordingly. I strongly believed that I wanted to, no, I could become a very powerful sorcerer in order to help my brother. It was a foolish thought, but when I realized it, it was already too late.”

As she has expressed, it was a simple, foolish reason, but Ian did not necessarily revisit that point. Has she not already come to understand it?

“If I had come clean to the Ivory Tower, it wouldn’t be just me, who would be punished for it. Those that helped me, those that could not refuse a favor from the princess would be hurt more than I. I couldn’t let that happen. Of course, I was also afraid.”

Ian could empathize with her situation. Unauthorized training of sorcery was a major, major, major crime. With her status as a princess, she would avoid harsh punishments, but those that had helped her, the sorcerers and the servants would be met with terrifying sentences.

“Therefore, there was no other option than to continue hiding it?”

“Yes. But, I have never forgotten the original objective. That is, to become a great help to my brother as a sorcerer and as I’ve started towards that goal, I kept going. That was my thinking.”

“You’ve certainly caused great inconveniences. That is to those around you.”

“...”

Princess Hailey was lost for words as she was thrown off guard with Ian’s single remark. Great-inconveniences, it was a word that she could not refute. She had realized it a very long time ago. It was just that this was the first time that she has heard it from another person.

“It is relieving to see that you realize it.”

Ian truly felt relieved. Has she denied it, or made an excuse that that was the only thing that she could have done, it was possible that his attitude towards her might have turned negative as it was the type of behaviors that he despised.

“Now that you’ve revealed the reason, please do go on. What is it that you wanted to speak of? I believe it has something to do with what you’ve just said.”

That was certainly true. Having provided a detailed response to Ian’s question and organizing her thoughts, the story that she wanted to tell became a bit clearer.

“First, I have a question that I wanted to ask you.”

“I am listening.”

“If you are to become the tower lord...”

“That’s impossible.”

Ian immediately cut off the princess’ words.

There was no reason to listen further.

It was because what she wanted to ask became immediately obvious to him.

“I concur with the rule that it is a major crime to train an unauthorized sorcerer, as such is an existence that is that much dangerous and powerful. It is not a bad rule.”

It was the most likely question that she would have asked. That is, should Ian become the next tower lord and that should the princess voluntarily report herself to the new tower lord, would the tower lord reduce the punishments of those around her.

“If your intention is to continue to hide it, as promised 5 years ago, I could turn the other way. However, it is that it will be hard for me to consent to what you may want. Punishment is a rule of law that must be followed.

Ian’s position was unshakable.

And there was not even a speck of falsehood.

“... I understand what you’re saying.”

“I knew that you would. You are an intelligent person.”

“Then, I would seek your advice this time.”

“Advice, my princess?”

This time, even Ian was not prepared.

What kind of advice would she be seeking?

Overcoming the limitation to become a 4th class?

Continuing to safely hide her identity?

Or avoiding punishment at any cost?

“When I first decided to become a sorcerer to help my brother, there was no one next to my brother. It was only my father, the king. Duke Oliver was there, but presumptuously, I thought that he was not sufficient.”

That was understandable. Not just towards Oliver, but towards all the knights, the same assessments were pervasive. Only recently the master swordsman title was given, but prior to that, no one believed knights to be on equal footings with the sorcerers.

“But things have changed now. At this time, next to my brother is, you, Ian, the great sorcerer that I always dreamed of becoming. There is also the Duke Oliver, the master swordsman of the empire. More than anything, my brother is transforming and headed in the right direction.”

Now, Ian is beginning to understand.

What the princess wanted to say.

“You’ve lost your objective, is that what you’re saying?”

“Close. There are great men next to my brother, but I, having obtained unauthorized training in sorcery, maybe becoming an obstacle in his way...”

The concern that the princess Hailey had was not to become a higher class sorcerer or safely guard her secrets. All that she wanted was one thing. That is, the safety of her

brother, the crowned prince and his smooth rise to power going forward.

“That is a simple problem.”

However, it appeared as a simple problem to Ian.

It was because a very important element was missing.

That is, of the princess.

“Please live your own life. That is the answer.”

“... Pardon?”

“The safety of the crowned prince and the rise of the crowned prince to the emperorship... these are not your life, are they? They are everything that the crowned prince has to live as his own life.”

Ian continued to speak.

“Do you wish to continue to grow your sorcery skills? Then please do so. After all, from the 3rd class, it is not other people’s help that will grow and further your level. It is an issue of whether one is born with the talent or not. And if you wish, I could teach you a new breathing technique. I was planning to share it with the Ivory Tower anyway.”

Even though mana was important, from the 3rd class, what is most important is mastering the clearly more difficult technique of operational ability. Only by overcoming the innate limitations, or through improvements, it is possible to reach the level of the 4th class.

“Do you wish to live a life as an ordinary princess? Then please do so. Do enjoy your pastime and socialize with the high statured noble ladies. Many marriage proposals should, undoubtedly, come and go in your way.”

As Ian brought up the subject of marriage proposal, the princess’ face turned red. In fact, there have already been many marriage proposals. It has been that way for few years, and as she has turned twenty, it has become more frequent.

“Or if you want to go out and see the world, it is the same. Do go out. You won’t be

enthroned, nor will you be a queen. You will always be a princess. Your place can also be taken care of by the other princesses. There are not any issues.”

“That, that...”

“Have I spoken incorrectly?”

Hailey knew better than anyone that in the palace, the status of princess is not that great. But as it was the same as when she heard the words, great inconveniences, it was the first time that she has heard it outright from another person.

“Perhaps, you may be thinking that it is difficult for a woman to travel alone? As you may not have any combat experience, you may not realize that being a 3rd class sorcerer is like having a one person weapon. You will be able to destroy even a large scale alliance of thieves that may come after you. If necessary, capturing them alive is not out of the question.”

Although it will require combat experience and sorcery skills, it was certainly not an exaggeration. In fact, the comparison would be considered as being way short of the reality.

“The point, as I’ve said before, is to live your own life. You have the time, sufficient background, and the power to make it happen.”

The world is half full with those that cannot live their own lives. From that perspective, the princess can be viewed as being born with blessings. So, rather than struggling with what to do next, Ian’s point is that use the same time, enjoying the blessings that she was endowed with.

“ ... ”

The princess did not say a word for a while.

It appears as she was in deep thoughts.

Ian did not particularly interrupt her.

He considered it a rest period while at it.

“What you mean.”

How long was the waiting?

The princess finished her thoughts.

“I understand.”

Has she reached a satisfying decision? Her continence appeared to be at peace. She was beautiful even when she was overtaken by worries and now, she appeared as gorgeous as a blooming flower.

“Thank you. I owe you a big favor.”

“Not at all, I am just sorry that I couldn’t help you.”

“No. Rule of law must not have any exceptions.”

As if she had completely forgotten about the fact that her request has been denied, or that she did not expect it to be granted from the get go, she said her sincere thanks to Ian.

“May I now begin the investigation? I must carry out my duties...”

“Ah! Yes, of course. What do I have to do?”

“You just need to stay still.”

The examination, applying great cancellation has finished in no time. There were not any effects of black magic, or existence of any side effects of nausea and vomit on the part of the princess. Was it because there was somebody watching? It appeared as if she was enduring it.

“There is nothing unusual. Thank you very much.”

With that confirmation, princess Hailey stood up from the chair. It must be that she had endured headache and nausea as she staggered. Ian held her wobbling body. Immediately, the princess’ face turned red.

“Are you alright? Should I fetch your servants?”

“No, that won’t be necessary. Thank you. Well, good bye!”

Perhaps, it was that she felt embarrassed or was in a hurry that the princess Hailey quickly exited the room. Seeing the princess leave the room, Ian let out a sigh of relief.

“Is the head following the flesh?”

Ian wasn’t all his usual, casual self. It was his face to face meeting with the princess, Hailey, who was the absolute innocent beauty, and in her prime age of twenty. Without the forty years of past life experience, it would have thrown him into a head spinning confusion from the very start of the meeting.

‘Perhaps, even more than the past life...

Knock! Knock!

There was no time to think any longer. The visitations from the royal family continued. As he was focused on the investigation for a while, any distracting thoughts have disappeared. A lot of time has passed as well. All scheduled tasks have been completed.

‘It was easier without Ragnar.’

Ragnar, the 5th prince, was the first one to be investigated after the evidence of the tower lord’s black magic was found. For him, it was because he was one of the closest persons to the tower lord. Although any effects of the black magic were not uncovered, he has decided not to come out of his quarters.

“I should slowly return...”

“Sir. Ian!”

He was about to exit the room, having completed his investigation. One of the palace guards that was ushering the subjects of the investigation entered the room, panting.

“What is going on?”

“The, the highness has arrived!”

“The highness?”

It was even before that conversation has ended. Terry Greenriver, the emperor of the empire, appeared behind the palace guard. Although his hair was gray in many places, his unique expression of playfulness hasn't been lost.

“Why are you so surprised?”

“My lord.”

Whether Ian quickly tended to the emperor with the proper courtesy or not, the emperor simply entered with a loud laughter. That wasn't all. He closed the door himself, and walked towards the chair in strides. Even though he was aged, his presence was different than any others.

“I am also a member of the royal family. Come to think of it, I am the one who has had private meetings with the tower lord for the longest time, am I not? One of the scopes of the authority of being the tower lord is to conduct one-on-one meetings with the emperor, when called for.”

Therefore, he was saying that he came, in person, to be investigated for black magic. Although it was not a wrong statement, it was hard to conceal his surprise from his sudden visit.

“You could have called for me...”

“Since you've been looking into hundreds of people, I thought I should help by not troubling you in that way. Is the palace a small place?”

The distance from the emperor's main palace to the guest room was certainly great. However, Ian could see it without too much difficulty. He could see it from the eyes, the demeanor, and in the speech. There was something that the emperor wanted to say to him.

‘Like daughter, like father.’

As the princess Hailey showed that exact same manner and eyes, so did her father, the

emperor. It was just like the father, like daughter.

“Do you have any orders to issue to your servant, my lord.”

Ian spoke first.

“Was I that obvious?”

The emperor responded as if to welcome that invitation.

Unlike the princess, he was audacious.

“Hmmm, I couldn’t help if it was too obvious. Come, seat for a minute.”

It was also the emperor that guided Ian to a chair. He was certainly different than any others. Irrespective of any conditions, he was a master at controlling the situation.

“I do wish to give you more time, but I did not realize how urgently the situation has been developing. It was hard to see how crazy that tower lord had become. So, I wish to put some order to the situation early on, is that OK with you?”

“Please issue your order, my lord.”

“5 years ago, you had at least pretended to show fear, but now you’ve become very audacious. You’ve become a 6th class sorcerer, and have achieved many accomplishments. Is it that you no longer see the need to humble yourself?”

“That is not so, my lord.”

“Ha-ha! That’s how you come across to me.”

The emperor’s words came across as being both a joke and serious. Ian’s position wasn’t too different either. What is the reason for showing humility? He was no longer the little lad that knew nothing 5 years ago. Ian, that is.

“Good. I was worried as to how to bring up this topic had you responded naively, but at least that is no longer an issue. As I am also pressed for time, I will ask you directly.”

The emperor’s attitude has turned suddenly. The light atmosphere that was with him

was no longer anywhere. With hollowed eyes, he stared at Ian. The unique Greenriver's royal family's golden eyes were flashing."

"What do you plan to do with my eldest son, the crowned prince?"

It was a short and clear question, but a very serious one.

Yet, there were so many meanings behind that question.

Ian replied as if he didn't understand.

"I fail to understand what you mean by your question, my lord."

"Yes, you did understand."

That was true. Ian understood the question.

There was not a way that he couldn't understand the meaning.

The issue was what to provide in his response.

What was the best way to answer?

That was, would it be even OK to respond?

'Serve a king again?'

He didn't feel like doing that at all.

He did not have such an intention.

Wouldn't it be the same as the past life?

It has to be different than then.

That's why I've turned back.

Nearly the 30 years of time.

‘However, the crowned prince... ’

Ian had no other choice, but to accept it.

He has grown ‘attached’.

Whether it was good or bad, everything grew on him as far as the crowned prince was concerned.

‘This was complicated.’

Whether to serve with all his might, or to kill him with a single swing of the sword, that was how ambiguous the crowned prince has become for him.

“ ... ”

Ian fell in deep thoughts for a while.

His thoughts came together.

He decided to play a little gamble.

“I.”

A sense of suffocating tension permeated the room.

The golden eyes of the emperor and the Ian’s eyes that see only good wrestled in the air.

“I have no intention of pledging my loyalty to the crowned prince.”

“No intention of pledging... loyalty?”

“Yes. My lord.”

It was certainly an unexpected response.

No intention of pledging loyalty?

Wasn't it an overly blatant answer?

The honesty has crossed the line.

"However."

As the emperor's lips were twitching.

Ian continued to speak.

"I intend to make him the emperor."

"What?"

"I even intend to have him become a good king."

This time, the emperor fell into deep thoughts.

No loyalty, but make him a good king?

It was rather a conflicting statement, in itself.

However, it wasn't just impossible either.

Therefore, he was able to understand it.

That is, as far as what Ian was saying.

It was rather an outrageous thought.

"Is anyone there?"

Nodding his head, the emperor called out for someone.

Then there came eunuchs that were standing by outside.

They carried in with them a large staff.

That was none other than the item, symbolizing the Ivory Tower's top position.

It was the 'staff of the tower lord'

Chapter 73

The Master Of The Ivory Tower

“Take it. This is the staff that was retrieved when Herbert was arrested.”

The staff, symbolizing the tower lord, retrieved from the tower lord.

What is the reason behind handing it over to Ian?

That was simple. It was to endow Ian with authority.

“As you may well know, it is not a simple matter when it comes to the selection process for the new tower lord. Even with a definite candidate as the successor, there are many little things that need to be done. Traditionally, it requires the tower lord to personally oversee the transition, after the selection is confirmed by the entire Ivory Tower, followed by the royal family’s approval. That’s what is called for by the customs and procedures.”

However, the current situation is different. The tower lord was abruptly executed. Of course, only was there not a transition plan prior to that, there was not even an identified heir. The process has become entangled.

“However, as the situation necessitated it, a decision was made to shorten the steps of the procedure for the better. Hence, I wish to leave this staff in your care.”

Bypassing the convoluted procedure such as obtaining the royal family’s approval, he wished to endow Ian with the authority of selecting the next tower lord, or if so wished, the power for Ian to autonomously rise to power himself.

“If you wish, you may rise to the stature of the tower lord yourself, or if you feel it to be too premature, you may appoint someone else to that position temporarily. I would gladly watch what you would do.”

Ian was astonished at the emperor’s disposition. As was with the tower lord’s personal riches, how is it that the emperor enjoys giving away all the decision making

authorities.

‘Are they not such projects that are usually handed over to the princes?’

With some reservation, Ian stared at the emperor.

The emperor’s golden eyes were bright as ever.

“I beg your pardon, your highness. However, before accepting all of your commands, I dare to ask a few questions. Would you grant me such a privilege, my lord?”

“Do speak.”

“I will support a seamless succession of his highness, the crowned prince. As anyone, who is a citizen of the empire knows about the ambition of his highness, the 5th prince, his ambition will certainly become cumbersome in this process.”

Ian was discussing the future of Ragnar.

“As your highness knows, I believe he will not forego his chances just because he has lost the tower lord and his support structure. What would you do with his highness, the 5th prince?”

The complete revenge that Ian was seeking goes beyond death itself. Rather, he wanted the ‘destruction of the name’. As it was the case with Herbert, the former tower lord of the Ivory Tower, he was seeking to keep Ragnar as being the vilest name to be spoken of throughout the generations.

“... I intend to place a tight surveillance on Ragnar, such that he will not be able to seek out any aspirations. Like a bird in a cage.”

The emperor’s speech was deliberately solemn.

“Only that he is also my son, is he not? As a prince, I wish to safeguard the least level of rights that are due him. At least, until I depart this world.”

Until he departs this world.

While his life is with him.

That part of the speech kept regurgitating in Ian's ears.

'There isn't that much time left, however.'

Ian knows about the emperor's death. That is, he knows that the time remained was not long. Since the king's demise was 2 years prior to the emperor's ascension of Ragnar in his former life, he would be afforded about 6 more years without a big change. For an emperor that consistently uses the top of the line elixir, it appears to be a short life time.

'There were a lot of rumors at that time as well.'

There were many theories of conspiracies such as assassination or poisoning as it seemed that he was in too great of a health to have so quickly withered with sickness. Also, as he was taking elixir to maintain his health, it only added fire to those theories. As a result, for the first time in the history of the empire, an autopsy was performed on the emperor, which failed to uncover any problems in the end.

'There was only blood for those that have proposed the conspiracies.'

If recalled correctly, it would be a short time. In reality, 6 years is not a short time, but it is certainly not a sufficient amount of time, either?

'6 years.'

As long as the emperor is in good health, there is no justification for killing Ragnar. Assassination? That was possible too. And there was, of course, a high level of confidence of not leaving any trace of it. The issue was that he would forever be remembered as 'the unfortunate prince'. The world still thinks of him as a 'genuine candidate to be a good king'. Was that all? The crowned prince will be identified as the powers behind it.

'Death shall come after all things have found their proper places.'

The death of the 5th prince shall come at the moment, only after everything is firmly in its place, so that no one will suspect even if he dies under some dishonorable circumstances. Until then, there was no other way than to let the emperor have it his way. Unable to do anything for the next 6 years, living as a prisoner may also become a fitting sentence for the bastard.

Perhaps, more so than death.

‘As he goes mad whenever he isn’t able to do something.’

After drawing a conclusion, Ian spoke to the emperor.

“Then, please allow me to be in charge of the surveillance.”

“You, personally?”

“Yes. The Ivory Tower will directly watch him, so that the 5th prince would not be able to plan any schemes or have any ambition.

The emperor fell in deep thoughts on the account of Ian’s proposal.

He recited as he slowly nodded his head.

“I see. I shall allow it.”

“Your grace is immeasurable, your highness.”

Having maintained his courteousness, Ian approached the eunuchs. He did so in order to receive the ‘tower lord’s staff’, which was made out of a great birch tree.

“I entrust you with this in your charge.”

The emperor spoke with a smile as Ian received the staff. He no longer spoke informally.

“Behold. Ian Page, the master of the Ivory Tower.”



Ian fell into deep thoughts over many issues.

Also, he had reached a number of decisions and conclusions.

The position of the Ivory Tower’s highest power.

He has decided to be seated as the 'tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

'Though as it may be a little too premature.'

Ian's destiny in this life was pulled up early from the start. Was it not out of the ordinary to have become a high ranking sorcery at the age of 12? There was no reason to determine whether timing was right at this time. One thing that was considered a good luck was that he had turned 18 years old with the year's passing.

'Absolutely hold on to the power that is afforded.'

Furthermore, use the power one hundred percent to advance self interests. Although many people have high expectations of Ian, the new tower lord, Ian was not a scarifying type that many might have thought him to be.

"Mother?"

Ian called for his mother after exiting his room. But, there was no one. Not even Douglas, Ledio and even the servant girls. It was strange as it was hardly unlikely that everyone would vacate the house.

'It's almost time to leave... '

Today, Ian will become the tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

It has already been widely announced.

Where would everyone be on a day like this?

'Anyone outside?'

It may not be anything as even the Fairy Queen was not in sight either. She will be with them while being treated as a family's pet cat. That powerful sorcerer of lightning.

"Hmm."

Ian shrugged his shoulders.

Then he went out of the house.

He reached the gate after passing through the flowerbed.

And immediately, he was in shock.

“...?”

It was only fitting. There were multitudes of people gathered just outside of the gate. The great number of people lined up in two rows to form a passage. The end of the passage was not visible, but it clearly led to the ‘Ivory Tower’.

“Ian!”

In the midst, Douglas, Ledio, and Vanessa were visible. He also saw the house servant girls and the palace guards. Espel, the pink cat and the Fairy Queen, was being held in the arms of his mother, displeasingly staring at Ian.

‘Did they come to see me? All of them?’

Even with the announcement of Ian as the new Ivory Tower’s tower lord has been widely known, it was not as important a celebration event that would cause such a large gathering of the people in the city.

Ian’s walk of life, up to now, especially defeating Herbert, the former tower lord of the Ivory Tower and rescuing the people, has certainly been the performance that mattered greatly. Was he not the hero that saved people, their families and even their neighbors’ families? Ian’s influence was widely reaching beyond imagination.

‘He had not even experienced it in his former life.’

He was sure that he had never received any type of acclaim from the people. It was so, as well, when he was the vanguard leading the unification of the continent. He was far from any sort of acclaims. He has lived as the subject of people’s attention of dread and fear. The whole world knew it. How many countless lives were taken by Ian’s magic.

“Sir Ian! Here, here we are!”

“Sir Ian!”

“U-um.”

As he continued his walk, he saw a group of Mado engineers, who were headed by Vance. Was that all? He saw the knights of the 2nd knights of the palace, who went through 5 years of joys and trials of training with him, as well as their leader, Oliver.

“I-an-!”

Even their lord, the crowned prince, came out to see Ian’s passage to the Ivory Tower. The princess Hailey was next to the crowned prince, lowering her head in bashfulness.

‘This is what it’s like? A pure hand that shows not even a drop of blood.’

As he walked forward, such thought engulfed him even more. He felt the same pleasure and satisfaction as when he had delayed the death of his mother and provided her with abundant life as a gift. That is, the satisfaction that came from the acknowledgement that he was served wisely by studying the golden dragon’s language, among the many dragon languages, and having reversed the time.

‘It isn’t such a bad feeling.’

What man will reject the faithful acclaim by the people? Unless one’s nature was severely entangled, one will only feel great. Buoyed by the feeling of pleasure, Ian walked one step after another through the people formed passage way, finally reaching the Ivory Tower.

“Welcome. Sir Ian.”

The Ivory Tower’s sorcerers were also gathered in formation, according to their levels. They gathered, forming a circle at the center of the room, for a simple reason. It was a formation that centered the ‘center elevator’, which was only used on a special occasion, like today.

“This way please.”

There were 3 categories of elevators at the Ivory Tower. There were purple elevator that every sorcerer can use and golden elevator that is reserved only for the high ranking sorcerers. Finally, positioned at the center of the Ivory Tower was a big, open

blue light elevator, the 'center elevator' that can be watched by all levels of the sorcerers as it rises up.

"Please enter."

Ushered by the sorcerers, Ian entered the great center elevator. Then the blue light elevator began to rise ever so slowly. As it rose by one level at a time, he saw the sorcerers gathered, surrounding the elevator in a round formation.

"Master of the Ivory Tower."

At the same time, kneeling on one knee, every sorcerer on the level repeated towards Ian Page, the new master of the Ivory Tower.

"Master of the Ivory Tower."

One level.

"Master of the Ivory Tower."

The next level.

"Master of the Ivory Tower."

There were 22 levels in the Ivory Tower.

He had passed countless number of sorcerers.

Finally, he reached the top of the tower.

It was the familiar room in this life as well as in his former life.

It was the 'tower lord's room' on the top floor of the tower.

"Master of the Ivory Tower."

There were the high ranking sorcerers of the Greenriver Empire. Besides the absent tower lord, who was executed, Helene, who was in confinement and Ian himself, the last 9 high ranking sorcerers lined up on two sides. Then there, at the end of the line,

he saw a single chair.

‘The throne of mana.’

The authoritarian that moves all the sorcerers of the empire.

The seat that only the master of the Ivory Tower could occupy.

Ian was heading towards that seat.

It was the seat that he had previously occupied in his former life once.

He didn’t expect any emotions. So he thought.

However, that wasn’t the case.

He felt the butterflies.

‘Was it because there were a lot more things to do now?’

Ian fell in to a thought for a short time.

He was about to take his seat at the throne of mana.

“Prior to taking the seat.”

Ian’s voice dispersed throughout the room.

It was heard on every floor through the communications facilities.

That is, all the sorcerers were listening.

“There was one issue that needs to be addressed.”

When everyone was wondering, Ian extended his staff forward.

It was the staff of the tower lord that he had received from the emperor.

“This is the staff that represents the true power of the Ivory Tower from the old days,

and passed down on to the tower lord. The history runs deep in this staff. I believe that there is no one that does not know this.”

Ian continued to speak.

“The lifespan of this old staff has run out as of today. It has fallen to become a tool that took countless lives and spirits by Herbert, the previous tower lord of the Ivory Tower, through his black magic.”

Then Ian wielded a spell on to the staff.

It was none other than a ‘rupture spell’.

“This signifies that this can no longer represent the master of the tower lord. How can a staff that has fallen by black magic represent the center of sorcery, the symbol of the Ivory Tower?”

Engulfed with the rupture spell, the staff of the tower master, the staff made out of the great birch tree, began to show cracks. What started with a one or two cracks have grown into tens and hundreds of long forks.

“From now on, along with the fate of this staff.”

Having grown many cracks, the staff of the tower lord fell to the ground in hundreds of pieces. The sorcerers that were in the lower levels could immediately recognize what was happening just from the sound of it.

“I also command that the Ivory Tower shall be reborn.”

Newly reborn, it was such a cliché. However, with the destruction of the ‘staff of the tower lord’, even that cliché proclamation has gained a lot of power. Every sorcerer clearly took it in to his ears, head and to his heart.

“In the name of the most pure mana.”



Ian has become the tower lord as of today.

He was seated alone at the throne of mana.

The major work has already been completed for the day at the Ivory Tower. It was free time for studying magic from now until tomorrow morning. There would not be any interruption or interference unless it was of a great urgency.

“Well...”

Ian slowly rose from his seat.

He took out a piece of paper from his pocket.

“Let me examine.”

There were drawings of ‘medicinal herbs’ and their names, which Ledio and Douglas had given him. They were the main ingredients of the Elixir, the ‘red dragon’s five breaths’ that was mentioned when ‘gargoyle’s eyes’ were shown to Ledio, 5 years ago.

“The warehouse of the Ivory Tower.”

The ‘warehouse of the Ivory Tower’ was personally overseen by the tower lord of the Ivory Tower throughout the generations. Even for high ranking sorcerer could only access it with an explicit approval by the tower lord. The free access to that warehouse has begun for him as of today. That is, for Ian Page, the new tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

Chapter 74

Dragonian (1)

The five breaths of the red dragon.

It was the mysterious elixir that was found through the illustrations left by Ledio's ancestors, when Ian gave him the 'gargoyle's eyes, 5 years ago. As much boastful worthy ingredients that they were, Ledio and Douglas studied them diligently and had prepared, by purchasing, every single ingredient that could have been bought.

—I'd like to slowly prepare the ingredients. Although it was only in theory, I have a good feeling and understanding, relating to the results of the concoction procedure, and on the skills of Douglas and myself.

Ledio had told Ian several months ago. It meant that with the pre-prepared ingredients and the contents of the illustrations, the results have already been reached its highest level. What remained at this time was to obtain the ingredients that weren't easy to purchase with money, followed by commencing the elixir concoction procedure.

'For the most part, they were medicinal herbs that were kept in the warehouse of the Ivory Tower.'

The former life of Ian was also the tower lord of the Ivory Tower. Although not accurate, due to the shortness of time spent as the tower lord of the Ivory Tower and not having much interest in alchemy, in the first place, he had managed the duties of handling the medicinal herbs. The relevance between sorcery and alchemy was very high.

'It would be nice to have everything here.'

Although he was the tower lord, it did not give him a free reign when it came to removing an item. However, items such as medicinal herbs did not cause any concerns. That is, for the investment purpose of personal study in the alchemy would fall under the tower lord's discretion. It is true that making good elixir or secret medicine, in

itself, would become a great power as far as the Ivory Tower was concerned.

‘There weren’t that many items to take anyway.’

The levels of artifacts in possession, in the warehouse, which were overseen personally by the tower lord, weren’t that great. That was only logical. The items and wealth that were stolen by Herbert, the former tower lord, for the most part, were supposed to be kept in the warehouse of the Ivory Tower.

Boo-woooing-!

As Ian injected mana into a crystal ball, a secret door has opened, behind the bookcase at the back of the room. The reason for the tower lord, being the manager of the warehouse throughout the generations, wasn’t all that grandiose. The location of the warehouse was at the back of the tower lord’s room. That was all there was.

Kw-kwoooong! Krrrrrrrr...!

With great clamor, the warehouse appeared beyond the bookcase. The visible size alone was extensive. That was only logical. The tower lord’s room was considered to be in great size, but was small when compared to the other floors. So, where has the rest of the space disappeared to? The warehouse would be seen to be making up the other half of the floor.

“The storage for the medicinal herbs...”

He had passed by countless number of items. They included such items that are used for sorcery, artifacts, finished elixir and even ancient books. Although they were all worth examining, the immediate priority was to find the storage that kept the medicinal herbs.

“Was it over there?”

It was in the deepest corner of the warehouse.

A door was visible behind the far right corner.

Even a placard, indicating ‘medicinal herbs storage’, was hung.

“Hmm.”

The inside of the storage was different than the outside. According to the dead woods’ characteristics, from temperature to lighting, the shape of the storage and their environments differed widely.

‘First, the root of mandragora.’

It was an herb, being kept there. It wasn’t difficult to locate it. As opposed to the grotesquely deformed shape of the leaf, its root looked like any other plants’. If there was any difference, it would be the crimson color as if it had been soaked in blood.

‘The flower of ambrosia.’

The flower of ambrosia, which boasts large purple petals, was also kept inside the warehouse of the Ivory Tower. They were rare, invaluable ingredients that could not have been purchased even with many billions, just a short while ago. However, all these came into his possession so easily. It was only because he has become the tower lord.

‘I suppose, it is the seat of the 2nd highest stature in the nation after all.’

Ian felt and realized the power of the Ivory Tower’s tower lord position from such ordinary things. It was all very familiar and that he has never taken any personal benefits through the unique authorities of being the tower lord up to now. He suddenly realized how ignorant he was to the worldly things in his former life.

‘This should do.’

He took all the medicinal herbs that were needed. Fortunately, all the medicinal herbs, on the list, were being stored there. Only in short due time, an elixir, in the highest quality on record, would be concocted. His anticipation grew by the minute.

‘How much, I mean what kind of effects would it have?’

These were ingredients of the highest rarity. The elixir to be made out of such ingredients, how great would be the effects of such great elixir? Although it has not been experienced, it would certainly be on a different plane than those that have been used until now. Ian’s footsteps became lighter as he exited the warehouse.



It has been one day since Ian had given the medicinal herbs, which were collected from the warehouse, to Ledio and his father. Having gone down into the laboratory that was built in the basement of the residency, the two alchemists haven't emerged since last night. Likewise, Ian could not get any shut eye all night. Had he performed the proper mana breathing, he wouldn't feel tired, but he stayed up all night having omitted the mana breathing.

'I have to stay focused.'

Ian had spent 5 years of his time as a 5th class sorcerer. It was due to the immature mana heart that had held him back. Although with a little growth, he had reached the 6th class a while ago, he has remained there ever since. Even though he has not expressed it, Ian was dissatisfied more than anyone. It is indicative of a mage's characteristic in reaching the highest level of frustration.

'The 7th class, the 8th class and beyond. There is a long way to go.'

Of course, 'the five breaths of the red dragon' elixir may not guarantee an accelerated growth of mana heart. There are no records on the effectiveness of its use, none the less the successfulness of the concoction, itself, has not even been recorded. Isn't this the same logic as completely transforming a child's body into a full grown adult? However...

'Anything possible must be mobilized.'

How long has he been yearning in his heart? People's movement was detected from the laboratory. It was Ledio and Douglas, coming up the stairs after the all night session of 'hay' concoction.

"Ah. Sir Ian."

"Boss."

Exhausted Ledio and Douglas greeted Ian first. However, their continence did not look too pleased. Ian was able to see it in their faces right away.

"Is there a problem?"

Ian asked cautiously.

“Yes. There is definitely. A problem...”

Ledio nodded his head.

Douglas also let out a big sigh.

“What sort of a problem?”

“... Insufficient ingredients. To say it.”

“What kind of ingredients?”

“That is...”

As Ian actively inquired, Ledio appeared displeased. Wasn't it Ledio, who had firmly requested Ian to bring back everything even from the warehouse of the Ivory Tower? It must be an extraordinary ingredient as even such person is showing displeasure.

“We also feel embarrassed. We couldn't even fathom that it was an ingredient.”

Ledio said a series of incomprehensible gibberish. As he signaled, Douglas approached Ian. In his hand, he held an ‘illustration’ book, considered to be the Ledio family's heirloom.

“Boss. Please read this section?”

Douglas pointed to a verse in the book.

Ian read the passage quickly.

“The five breaths of the red dragon shall find its proper color, only after mixing the hot breath of a half dragon man that inherited the blood of the dragon.”

It was the last passage of the book, in which the comprehensive list of ingredients and concoction method were written in. What is ‘the breath of a half dragon man that inherited the blood of the dragon’? Ian failed to understand what it was saying.

“What does this passage mean?”

“Initially, we believed it was just an abstract. I thought that heating it once was written in a fanciful way. This illustration book is like that in general. Even the names and explanations are in the same way. Perhaps, many of our ancestors were wandering poets on the side... So, I flipped the page, thinking not too seriously as it appeared to be just a part of the concoction procedure.”

That was Ledio’s explanation. He thought that the final elixir would be created once it was heated up. However, no matter how many times it was tried, there was no success. Having it repeatedly concocted from the beginning to the end did not make any difference, either. They searched for the method all night, but could not find it in the end.

“Although there is a possibility that the concoction method is incorrect, this passage is bothering me. The hot breath of a half dragon man, I don’t think it actually means a half dragon man...”

Ian, Ledio and even Douglass were all in deep thoughts. It was at that time when something was tapping on Ian’s ankle. If tapping his ankle, and no other area, then there was only one individual within this mansion who would do this. Perhaps, it would be a more appropriate expression to use ‘one animal’?

“Espel, what are you doing? What’s going on?”

Ian said as he readily picked up Espel, the pink cat, off the floor. No one knows that she is the Fairy Queen. Hence, Ian treated her as a pet cat as others would have treated her.

(That half dragon man, I know of it.)

A truly clear and cool voice echoed inside Ian’s head. It was the voice of the Fairy Queen that communicates directly to the mind, rather than through the ears.

(It is a simple problem. I recognize it right away.)

The Fairy Queen boasted with pride.

Upon hearing this, Ian spoke, looking over to Ledio.

“This issue, I think I may understand.”

“What? Are, are you sure?”

“Please wait a minute. There is something that I need to check.”

“Of course, please be on your way. Hurry!”

After issuing a small apology to Ledio, Ian went into the library. Immediately closing the door behind him, he has incanted the silence spell. No one thought it strange that Ian has entered the library with a cat. After all, was it not a pet cat that Ian had brought?

“It is OK now.”

(Gosh, my sad life.)

Quickly, the Fairy Queen reverted into her original form.

She didn’t miss an opportunity to verbalize a complaint.

“Please continue to tell me what you were saying earlier.”

(Do you wish to hear?)

“Yes, of course.”

(Then you must promise to do me a favor first. Rather than a favor, I should say let’s make a deal as I will give you information and you accept my request.)

The Fairy Queen was certainly in the driver’s seat.

She spoke while somersaulting in the air.

The shiny pink dust dispersed throughout the room.

“Your request is?”

(Return this body directly to my nest...)

“You know that you would have to speak anyway. Since I’m offering you that opportunity, please do make your request that can be granted. I know that you are working very diligently around the family, so I am offering you the chance. Dear Queen.”

Seemingly striking down the request for her to be able to return, Ian went even further, including a threat. Even worse for her, it was all true. With an order to talk right now, she would have no choice, but to say what was in her mind.

(Condescending human! If it wasn’t for the power of the family...!)

“I am banning the expression of condescending human from now on.”

(Con...! Con... Aeek!)

She heard the word in passing, but she actually could not verbalize the expression of ‘condescending human’. The Fairy Queen’s rage blew over.

(Hugh... Good.)

Accepting the situation, she recited as she sighed.

(I can’t do this anymore.)

“Cannot do what?”

(Feline! I no longer wish to play a cat! This is embarrassing and uncomfortable! Just let me take the form of a human instead. Although both are of embarrassing forms, I’d rather choose to be comfortable, shouldn’t I?)

She really must have hated it. That is, to be playing the part of a pet cat. Ian was also thinking about it. After all, whatever the situation was, she was the queen of the fairies. Hence, being treated like a pet animal was not an easy thing to swallow for her. If it wasn’t for the power of the family, a city would have been annihilated already.

“I understand. I will grant it.”

(Re... really?)

“I warn you in advance, even being in a human form will definitely accompany some discomforts.”

(I don't care! Anything would be better than a cat, wouldn't it?)

"Well. I am not sure?"

After thinking over and over, Ian concluded that being in the form of a cat would be more comfortable. To live as a beautiful woman, of beyond one's imagination, may not bring about a comfortable life.

"Only that let's agree to push out the final decision for a few days. There is a need to explain it to the family too."

(That's understandable. They will be sad, should they lose a cat as well. Especially your mother likes me... I mean a cat quite a lot.)

Ian gave a small smile upon hearing the Fairy Queen.

Then he returned to the original subject of the conversation.

"Now, could you explain? What kind of entity that half dragon man is about."

(Sure, there isn't much to say or not say. It's simple.)

As the Fairy Queen took airborne by levitating quickly, she sat on the shoulder of Ian. It was so that she could whisper into his ears.

(Half dragon man, also known as the 'dragonian'. Like me, it is by the power of their family.)

Chapter 75

Dragonian (2)

“Dragonian?”

It was a brand new entity even for Ian. He had researched all sorts of alien races in order to study the dragon language. If this was a race that Ian wasn't familiar with, it must be an unknown race in reality.

(There are eight in the family? That's what I know. Simply being born with their seeds does not make one a dragonian. In fact, it is near impossible as most of them die before birth.)

Ian's interest wavered upon learning a new fact. He had believed that it was only an expression, but perhaps, there exists 'descendants of mixed races' of other species?

(They take the basic human form, like you, but incongruously have their eyes, wings, and even tails. Also... That's right. There is somewhat of a similarity with you as well.)

“Similarity?”

(The magic of human, also known as the magic of techniques, was it? They weren't inherited with the language of the dragons. Instead, they were born with particularly strong skills in this field. Maybe they are as strong as your present self, maybe even stronger.)

They could be even stronger than Ian?

The interest was peaking as he continued to listen.

He even found himself competing.

(At any rate, I am sure that the half dragon man refers to those dragonians. Perhaps, the saying, breathing, refers to breath. In their sad form, they even imitate it, having

inherited their blood. Ah, the breath means...)

“I know what it is, at least what breath is.”

The dragon breath.

It is an expression that often appears in story books.

To simply put it, it may equate to dragon’s lethal move?

(Of course, it is measly when compared to the dragons’ breaths. It is sad to be even calling it breath. Did you say elixir? It may just be perfect for heating up your, the human’s, flimsy concoction.)

Her words seemed to be accurate.

The hot breath of a half dragon man.

The breath of a dragonian.

Does it not fit perfectly?

‘All that has to be done is to find it.’

There was nothing else to worry about beyond that.

Wouldn’t the power of the family be set in motion?

Having sorted out his thoughts, Ian asked the Fairy Queen.

“Where could I go to meet? Them?”

(Not certain. Did I not say it before? I haven’t seen them for many hundreds of years. In fact, you, humans, should be more knowledgeable of their whereabouts.)

What is she talking about now?

Ian calmly opened his mouth.

“No way, this is the first time that I have ever heard about the entity of the dragonians, from you, the queen. If this is new information for me, and I even studied the language of the dragons then it will certainly be new to every ordinary person.”

It wasn't an empty statement. If there ever was such an entity, it would be highly unlikely for Ian to not know of it. One of his lifetime achievements was to have studied the language of the dragons. Wouldn't it be a dream come true to find a bloodline of the dragons?

(That's odd. You know the existence of the fairies, how is it that you are not aware of those entities? They are a family of race that has lived and, perhaps, most closely around you, humans.)

The Fairy Queen blabbered as if she was confused with Ian not knowing of them. However, Ian felt the same as he failed to understand. The family of race that lives close to the humans?

The dragomans?

‘The alien races that live close to humans would be...’

‘The dwarfs that built a fortress in the ‘mountain range of Broon Hill’ and a few elf races in the forest were all there were. It was so even going over the entire history, but the dragonians? It was too unexpectedly sudden at every level.

(They hold a unique world of psyche. The dragonians, that is. What would be the best way to explain it... They are even unsettled in their desire to tell the whole world how great they are? And in the process, they work hard even to protect the self-esteem of their half breed descendants? That's right. That is the perfect explanation!)

The Fairy Queen nodded her head as if to show satisfaction at her own explanation. Then she continued to speak.

(At least it was that way until not too long ago. They had to tell their own greatness to the insipient humans. The advanced race has to directly cause enlightenment. They used to go around speaking such things in glib fashion. I believe they even went into the human world to have done something, too?)

‘Enlighten’ the insipient humans.

There was one thing that came in to his head.

‘Religion, was the name the Order of the Dragons, perhaps?’

It was one of the information that he had found from his former life.

It was the religion that worships the dragons as if they were gods.

He knew of its existence.

But, there was a problem.

‘It was a rural country religious group that was worse than a cult.’

He had sought out for a ‘religion that worships dragons’ as a way to further his studies in the language of the dragons, but unexpectedly discovered that the ‘Order of the Dragons’ was a small religious group. It was a scam that was set up in the country to prey on the poor rural farmers.

‘I reckon the dragonians weren’t part of the scammers.’

According to the Fairy Queen, they are sorcerers that possess power as strong as Ian’s. Not only do their loyalty and respect towards the dragons would be unmatched, their pride of being the descendants of such entities would also be extraordinary as well.

“When you say until recently, when exactly was recently?”

(Let me see? I reckon at least one hundred years may have passed.)

“Hah...”

Ian let out a deep sigh.

Sure, I knew it all along.

I assumed at least one hundred years, or several hundred years if longer.

The conditions must have changed.

‘The religious order that I had sought out was either a fake.’

Or perhaps, with time, it had dwindled.

It would be at least one hundred years.

There were many possibilities to consider.

‘Something might have happened in the 20 years of time.’

It was about twenty years after when Ian began his study of the language of the dragons in earnest. During that time, the possibility for the ‘Order of the Dragons’ to have changed was strong.

‘I must investigate from the start and do it properly!’

Of course, it would be difficult to personally investigate thoroughly. There existed an intelligence organization within the Ivory Tower. However, it would not be appropriate to have them carry out a personal investigation on his behalf, so a decision was made to employ a 3rd party team.

‘The Guild of Thieves.’

Ian had, on occasions used them in his former life, rather used very often.

‘Day Break.’

The leader of that group was rather useful.

He wasn’t too likable though.

But, he is very tight lipped.

Even in that kind of world.



This is the organization that mines intelligence from the back alleys.

The people of the continent generally calls such organization as the 'Guild of Thieves', but the Guild of Thieves is not a single group. There exist countless guilds of thieves in every city and the majority of them are just 'guild of small time thieves', struggling to get by each day.

"Boss. There is a visitor."

"Who is it? At this time."

If there were small time guilds of thieves, on the opposite end of the spectrum was grand scale guild of thieves as well. 'Day Break' is the face of such a grand scale guild of thieves, having branch offices within the empire's capitol city limits of Green-Riverdium and even in other cities.

"He seems to be a first time visitor."

As the rough looking underling reported, 'Crude', the Day Break's young leader and one of the eight pillars of the back alley world, put down the holy book that he was reading. He had unusual feet of silver.

"That's not what I'm asking?"

The leader, Crude, inquired in surprise. It has already been a while since they have been receiving only prescreened visitors. Only by recommendations, that is, only those that have been referred by their existing clients were able to make contacts with the Guild. To become a certified client is the next step, but even the first meeting must be accompanied by the referrer.

"That, that is, he came alone."

"Came alone?"

The process of making contacts with Day Break is convoluted. Even the required steps regularly change after certain period of time. Unless it was an existing client, or referred by the existing client, making contacts with the organization is extremely

difficult, even by chance.

“Shit, information must have leaked somewhere again.”

Crude got up quickly after drawing that conclusion.

He even grabbed the two daggers that were on the desk.

The dagger looked very exquisite.

“Let’s go. I need to find out which bastard is going around leaking info.”

The main venue of Day Break’s business operation was the ‘monster arena’. It was very popular since the monsters are violent and have fighting skills that exceed human gladiators. Further, it is a legal operation. The battles are fought by the monsters, considered to be less than the animals.

“Where is he?”

“He said he would wait and take a look around. Please wait a minute.”

Several of the underlings dispersed to find the guest, rather an uninvited visitor. How long has the waiting been? Finally, the underlings brought someone from among the guests of the arena. It was a man whose head was half covered with a widely sloping brown hood.

“Is that you, sir? Who wishes to deal with us?”

Crude, the leader of the guild, asked with courtesy.

“I have come to purchase information that I need.”

The ‘visitor’ in the brown hood replied. He was holding a lot of betting tickets in his hand. It appeared as if he has placed a load of money on the bets.

“You’ve come to the right place. This way please.”

After giving a small grin, Crude led the way. He led the visitor to the 2nd floor guest room at one corner of the arena, rather than to the main office of the guild. It was a

guest room in name only as the room was like a warehouse for storing junks and broken things.

“It’s a humble place, but have a seat please.”

“Where should I seat?”

“Well, just anywhere you see fit. Ha-ha.”

Upon Crude’s reply, the man in the brown hood chose an old chair and sat in it. But as it was shaky, he could not sit comfortably. By now, the guest would have gotten the message, but the man in the hood remained at ease. After examining other chairs, he gave up and even showed an unusual behavior by sitting on the floor.

‘He is either foolish or full of confidence.’

Crude thought as he observed how relaxed the man carried himself. All that this man was confident about must be money. It happens often. Some people swarm around, thinking money is everything. Day Break was not an ordinary guild of thieves in the first place. Beyond selling information, they have their business tentacles reaching into many fields, through which they are raking in big bucks. So, they are not easily motivated by a person of limited status or amount of money.

‘Those who know would not act like this, perhaps, a merchant who came in to a lot of money recently?’

Crude examined the man behind the hood. As the leader of an intelligence organization, he was familiar with most of the great people. He knew most of them from great merchants, royalty, sorcerers of the Ivory Tower, to even the royal family members.

‘I would know once the hood is removed.’

Crude stopped trying to figure out the man’s identity. He signaled with his chin and his underlings shut the door with a bang. They even blocked the doorway. It was clearly a confinement. Of course the subject of the confinement was the visitor in the brown hood, rather ‘uninvited guest’ whom they believed to be a person that came, thinking he had sufficient amount of money.

“I am sure that my boys have already asked you, but how come you did not come with

your referrer? It is a quite important rule for us.”

Still, let’s check it out first.

Crude asked hoping to find out.

“Because he is not of this world.”

“What?”

“The referrer, I am referring to.”

“Ha-ha, not of this world? So from what other world are you from?”

There was no need to listen any longer.

Look at this fool, talking nonsense.

It was already clear that he is panicking.

“Who did you hear from?”

Crude threateningly demanded.

He no longer treated the visitor with courtesy.

No eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

This room was constructed for such a purpose in the first place.

That is, this humble external guest room.

“What are you referring to?”

“The way to make contacts with us. Have you heard it from one of our clients, bought it with money? Stolen it? Threatened it out? Or through friendship?”

As it happens often, Crude alluded to many different circumstances. Of course, there was not an exception in any case. All of it was to be blacklisted, including this uninvited

guest as well as the client that had leaked the information.

Chapter 76

Dragonian (3)

Until just a moment ago, Crude's thought was like this.

Isn't he, himself, the main man?

The Guild was originally found by his father, who had died early. After inheriting the Guild, he grew the business into as it is today.

Any business that he had invested in had always prospered.

As they say money grows money, he was so rich that even the greatest merchant wasn't a subject of his envy in present time. Was that everything? He had many trustworthy underlings. Any man that was as successful as he was, such a person would have been defined as the main man of this world, or at least one of the greatest men in the world. That is, one of the greatest men that controls all of the continent's economy, politics and culture.

However.

'Ivory...'

'The big man' that Crude has always dreamed of.

The greatest of the greatest men there were.

The one who had rose to the highest ranking sorcerer at the youngest age.

The sorcerer, also, called the teacher of the crowned prince.

The young and the new master of the Ivory Tower.

'... tower lord?'

The young man, who was called, Ian Page.

That great man has appeared before his eyes.

There was no way to know why he has come.

There was not a single strain of clue as to why.

‘Maybe, no.’

No, it can’t be.

There is no way. There is no way!
Crude thought it over and over again.

The underlings around him were in the same boat.

‘Why would the tower lord of the Ivory Tower be here?’

What logical reason would bring the tower lord of the Ivory Tower to the Guild of Thieves? There was a well established intelligence department within the Ivory Tower. Was it because of personal reasons? Even if that was the case, he wouldn’t come here in person. He would have sent a trusted lieutenant. Crude was sure. He had met many high statured persons and they were all like that.

‘Of course. It must be a look alike. Surely a look... ’

“I came from the Ivory Tower after killing time, fooling around.”

“Ki... time, fouling...?”

Crude let slip the latter part of the visitor’s response.

He wasn’t even able to pronounce the words properly.

It was as if his tongue was becoming numb.

‘...?’

No, it wasn't just a simple feeling.

Not just the tongue, but from his head to toe.

Every part of the body became frozen solid.

The paralysis condition has really taken over his body.

"Uuum... Uh?"

"Mu, Mummy...!"

It wasn't just the silk Crude.

Every underling around was the same.

They fell here, there and every which where.

The tongue was tied, and was very tough to breathe.

'Sorcery... '

It is sorcery.

It must be sorcery.

It was the sorcery that freezes the subjects' bodies.

Was it called 'paralyze'?

"It is dangerous to throw the knife so wildly. Isn't it?"

No one in the guest room thought it that way. There was no chance in hell that Crude would make such a mistake or that Ian would simply take the hit. It's just that it couldn't be verbalized.

"I used sorcery because I was surprised."

Ian said something that no one could believe and as he waved, the paralysis spell that

had overtaken Crude and everyone in the room was neutralized. The frozen bodies began to move normally, and the puffed up blood vessels that were about to explode became stable as well.

“Wheeze! Wheeeeeze! Wheeze!”

Most of the Guild of Thieves’ underlings were either breathing tersely or immediately tested their physical conditions. But there was only one person, Crude, the boss of the Guild of Thieves, was looking at Ian with caution. Whatever it takes, he needed to get out of this bad situation.

‘What, what should I do... ’

Crude has met many people that were on cruise control of success such as high ranked government officials, royals, and well known merchants. So, he was very confident. He had guts to take control of any situation and wouldn’t twitch one bit even before a person of high power or wealth. But, not right now. It was very much, not right now.

‘The tower lord, tower lord of the Ivory Tower...!’

What is the tower lord? That is the highest point of sorcery. Just by a simple will, he had the power to wipe out the entire Guild of Thieves. Even if he had made a grave mistake against the emperor, he wouldn’t be in such primal fear that he was in right now.

“What a terrible way to greet a visitor.”

The young tower lord murmured.

That murmur has solidly found home at the end of Crude’s ear tunnels.

No matter whatever is done from now on, it had to be demonstrated by action.

“Uh, Uh, What personally brings the master of the Ivory Tower...”

“I have been regretting it already.”

“Re, Regret sir?”

“I am sitting on the floor of a weird warehouse.”

Ian rose from the floor and dusted off his behind. He didn't forget to show dissatisfied face, although he did not even had a speck of dust on him due to the effects of clean magic.

“That is, Please, Please accept my sincere apology first!”

Crude, the boss of the guild, begged on his hands and knees as he bowed. He didn't even mind all the dirt and foreign objects that entered through his mouth and nostrils. Only if it would preserve his life and the guild.

“We have made an internal mistake! Should we have known it in advance, there would not have been such a grave mistake! Please have great mercy and we beg for your forgiveness for our mistake!”

He repeatedly hit his head against the floor as he begged.

It wasn't just an act either. There was blood pouring down his forehead.

The desperate desire to hold on to his life was obvious.

“Please stand up. You could break your skull.”

“Even if my skull would break in to pieces...!”

“That's not to my liking.”

“I, I will fix it right away!”

Crude immediately stood up after hearing Ian.

The blood streamed down his face and reached his neck.

He must have pounded his head quite fiercely.

“I, too, apologize for not complying with the rules. As it was a personal matter, there wasn't a particular referrer.”

“Of course. It must have been an urgent matter. It is our mistake for not knowing that and not giving you a proper welcome!”

“Ha-ha...”

Groveling takes many forms. But the present form of Crude’s groveling, truly demonstrated the cowardice, itself. It was the posture that threw out every part of his self respect? A similar situation had been encountered in the former life as well. Even at that time, it wasn’t as desperate and sad looking as it is now.

‘The visible stature is certainly pleasurable’

It was Ian, living his second life.

He has finally seeing the world for what it is.

“Let us attend to you in a real guest room. How could we attend you, the tower lord of the Ivory Tower, in a humble place like this...”

“No, as I’m pressed for time, let’s start talking.”

Crude shut his mouth upon hearing Ian.

Ian Page, the new master of the Ivory Tower.

An understanding came over as to who he was.

‘His standard is absolute.’

There must be a line that he had drawn.

As long as that line is not crossed, he will be understanding.

However, the moment that line should be crossed.

‘How he would change cannot be anticipated.’

At the moment Crude swallowed.

“As I have told you earlier, I’ve come to buy information.”

Ian continued to speak.

“As it is a personal matter, I was reluctant to mobilize the Ivory Tower’s manpower and I heard a rumor while contemplating. There was a guild of thieves that have all the elements, skills and guaranteed secrecy.”

“It is my honor, and your praise is flattering.”

“The first impression was certainly somewhat disappointing though.”

“...”

“Anyone can make a mistake.”

“I would do everything to not disappoint...”

“I’d rather that you show with your action.”

Show with action.

Be diligent in the primary job.

Crude got the message without too much difficulty.

He lowered his body as low as possible as he spoke.

“Please command your orders. If the intel can be provided, it will be delivered immediately, if some investigation is needed then the needed intel will be presented as soon as possible, sir.”

As Crude committed all his might to this.

“By any chance, have you heard of the order of the dragons?”

Ian cut to the chase and brought up the subject.

I know them as a form of a religious group that worships dragons like gods. But to rate them based on their size and reputation, it is somewhat ambiguous to be calling it a religion. There is not a good example within the empire and even in the far away principality beyond the great plain, one must go to the end of the west..."

He must not be the boss of the guild by name only. His responses flowed after a simple question of if he knows. The location of the obscure corner of the country, in which Ian had located the scammers in his former life, is being brought up.

'I suppose, even then, I had gone there after having received intel from these bastards'

Things do not change.

That is, the information that the Guild of Thieves has on the order of the dragons.

Not just one or two years, but after some twenty years later.

Of course, the change comes little bit at a time, only after certain activities. In this life, the request for intel would be more extensive in terms of seeking out the whereabouts of the dragonians'.

"I also know of that particular order of the dragons."

"Then, do you want an in-depth investigation?"

As the situation has returned stable, Crude reverted back to his innate, fast wit. He exacted a perfect guess that what Ian wanted was a thorough investigation.

"Yes. From trivial information to groundless rumors, without dropping a single word, I'd like you to investigate everything. Let me say it again, even any groundless rumors are fine."

Ian emphasized groundless rumors twice. Crude heard it to not make attempts to judge any intel's importance, but even that wasn't to be an issue for him.

"Ah, and the service fee..."

"I will not accept any fees. Yes, I realize that the service fee is a small potato for the tower lord. Only that please consider it as my, and entire guild's small token of sincere

apology for our mistake.”

Crude spoke without any stoppage.

It was the comment that he had prepared a while ago with respect to the service fee.

The moment that he thought it would be a sufficiently prepped comment.

“Then please accept this.”

“... Pardon?”

Ian gave Crude the half of what he was holding in his hand for a while. They were all the bets that he had made at the arena. Just by the thickness, it was obvious that the amount of bets made were substantial.

“This is...?”

“I will pay for the service fee with the payment on the winnings. It should be a considerable amount. Was it Carlas, the Ice Troll with the spear? The pay off odds was high.”

A moment later, the voice of the MC, responsible for the operation of the arena, dispersed loudly over the crystal amplifiers. The thin wooden walls of the warehouse could not keep the sound out.

-What a turnaround! The old fighter of the clan of the Ice Troll, facing retirement after all the losses! The gray haired Carlas has defeated Peanut, the indomitable Ork!

At the same time, Crude became confused.

He knows very well of the gray haired Carlas.

He was none other than the arena’s ‘punching bag’.

He was the 'soliciting tool' to increase gambling participation.

That old monster legs has won?

Against Peanut, the Ork with one hundred percent chance of winning?

"What, what..."

Event the confusion was short lived.

The reason could be inferred.

Who was it that placed bets on Troll?

It was the sorcerer. The 6th class tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

'Sorcery...?'

He could draw a conclusion when his thoughts came that far. It was a competition that involved a sorcerer. Under a normal circumstance, the competition would have been stopped for an investigation to be conducted, but not this time. Who was the sorcerer that has affected the outcome? That was the 6th class, tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

"Thank, thank you. Your perception is excellent."

In the end, there was only one way.

That is to appear sincere and accept what was being offered.

Whether Ian was responsible or not, there was nothing else that Crude could do.

There was no courage to question the tower lord of the Ivory Tower.

There was no way to prove that sorcery was involved either.

There was nothing that could have been done.

Chapter 77

Dragonian (4)

“Really the same...”

The 5th Prince Ragnar’s calmness.

There was a servant from the Imperial Palace standing in front of Ragnar. And surprisingly, he had the same face as Ragnar, including the hair on his legs. Even if he was reported to be a hidden twin, there was absolutely no difference.

“But, is it that simple? Outside, the mages of the Ivory Tower are keeping a close watch on me. Ian Page, that fucking bastard deployed the mages. I don’t think you can deceive him.”

It had been quite a number of days since Ragnar had been imprisoned in the Imperial Palace. It was not a formal prison sentence, but rather, it was a form of captivity which forbade everything else besides the ability to eat, sleep, and walk around.

“You don’t have to worry about that. The Master is present in the Ivory Tower now, and he is much more wicked than he appears.”

“What? The Master?”

Even Ragnar knew.

‘A 6th class mage is an amazing existence itself, but a much better mage? How much will a better master be?’

“Master will see you in-person and share the details.”

The servant with the identical face of Ragnar replied. He opened a book and started to create a portal. The portal book’s effects were similar to the one the previous tower lord used to possess.

“This, what is this?”

“Let’s go, it’s a portal to escape the capital.”

“Portal?”

Harboring a little suspicion, Ragnar was hesitating when someone’s hand emerged from the portal. A senile voice could be heard.

“Your Majesty. Please take my hand.”

“Sir Dumphil?”

Both the hand and the voice belonged to the imperial knight ‘Dumphil Morit’. On the day of the execution, this was the exact same person who handed him a ladder amidst of all the chaos.

“...”

Ragnar hardened his heart and stepped into the portal. On the other side was a forest with a night sky. The light that could typically be seen was not present.

“Huh...?”

It was cold everywhere and even Ragnar couldn’t avoid but be embarrassed.

‘Isn’t he an extraordinary mage?’

It was not easy to calm his rapidly beating heart.

“There is no need to be surprised.”

“But I don’t remember a skill like this in the Ivory Tower.”

“Your Majesty. Did you really think that our friend Herbert reached the peak of the tower with his own abilities? Even though he received great power, I was the one who pushed that young man to greater heights. However, that was all I was responsible for. Thanks to him self-destructing, I’ve got less work to do.”

He turned the burgundy hoodie upside down.

Dumphil Morit who was walking ahead spoke.

“The world is wide, and only a few chosen ones can observe the vast world. Your Majesty has been chosen. Your Majesty, it is your decision whether to receive it or not.”

“The chosen?”

“Yes, the chosen. The Master can be regarded as the most ideal monarch in the entire whole kingdom who will erase the old truth from ignorant people and pave a new beginning.”

Old truth, new beginning.

Ragnar did not understand.

‘What the hell? These guys...’

He had no choice but to think about it. The letter that he received on the day of the execution said ‘I will help you, wait a while.’ He wanted to see the forces who joined Dumphil, but it wasn’t possible then. Earlier, he saw a servant who looked identical to him. With magic that is as mysterious as the portal, he received the title ‘Master.’

“... Order?”

The official state religion Landor was dominant even with many religions out there. Ragnar knew everything related to it, and he had also heard of the rituals. By any chance is it one of those religious orders?

‘The conclusion of the old truth and the beginning of a new truth. Do they want to alter the religious concept of the state? They want to use someone like me who is of the royal family as a tool.’

The mind of Ragnar began to rapidly spin. With the few clues out there, he attempted to combine them and seek the truth. And he was satisfied with it, because such tools were welcomed. Would it not be a scheme employed by an emperor?

‘The tool is not me however, it’s you guys.’

A sly smile arose on his face.

‘How long have I been walking behind Dumphil?’

The wilderness forest where the capital will fall.

And at that place, the light began to shine.

“Oh! It has come.”

What stood out was the rock.

A larger yet unmatched rock.

The rock was in the center.

Like Dumphil, the people were wearing burgundy hoodies.

“I see His Majesty.”

Dumphil and Ragnar cautiously approached the men adorned with burgundy hoodies. He knew the method that he had learned honestly.

‘Nobility’

Around twenty men were present. In terms of their posture, they resembled noble figures. Although it was night and it was hard to get a clear look at their faces, one thing was certain.

‘This is not an ordinary group.’

Is it possible that nobody could have known about the existence of this group? These people seem to have strength in controlling the situation, but they don’t seem to be better than the previous tower lord.

“Please introduce yourself. This is a secret meeting for you to meet the Master, so only the top executives have been gathered here today.”

Following what Dumphil said, Ragnar introduced himself to these people. Though, surprised soon followed, since there were more familiar faces than he had thought.

‘If this is so... ’

Then this a greater force than what I imagined.

The level of power that they possess would be much more.

“Nice to meet you. By any chance, am I the one you wanted to meet?”

Ragnar finished his greetings quickly.

He spoke out more actively than he thought.

These were the new support forces for him.

And this was also a tool for the emperor.

These guys would definitely serve me well.

‘I don’t care about the others.’

Isn’t being the last one to laugh the sign of a true winner? There is no fuss at the moment; it’s my turn to gather them as the tools. I’ll accumulate the mighty forces in my palm beyond imagination.

“However, I’m not much aware. What is the cause for this gathering? What kind of work do you guys do? Will we be on the same boat even I’m not able to obtain it? Please explain everything.”

Ragnar asked them to clarify in order to learn about the direction that they were heading in. A voice that can be trusted upon listening was one of the most important weapons for Ragnar.

“Of course. But we are not the ones who can remind you all of the truths. How can you tell the truth of the whole world? But the creator is different.”

The world’s truth.

A hesitant explanation.

The authoritative Master is a human.

Ragnar barely managed to hide his scoff.

Immediately, at that moment.

“Finally! You are here.”

Prompted by Dumphil’s voice, everyone looked up at the sky.

‘Can he also fly like that guy?’

By ‘that guy,’ he meant Ian Page.

‘There is no way that this guy is going to come flying, right?’

Of course, it is not an impossible.

Observing this person, he looked like a strong mage.

“The only descendant from the dragon.”

After a while, the divine presence appeared.

Just like the prediction, he came from the sky.

But something felt odd.

It was different from how Ian flew.

‘He doesn’t seem like a mage.’

“The only descendant from the dragon.”

“The only descendant from the dragon.”

“The only descendant from the dragon.”

Dumphil started chanting and the others successively followed by kowtowing on the ground. On both the sides of Ragnar, people were on their knees. He was not accustomed to this gesture, so he held his head high. He was amazed after scrutinizing the newcomer.

‘Dragon’s descendant?’

Not of a god, but the descendant of a dragon?

Do dragons concern themselves with religion?

Why is a dragon called the initiator of magic?’

‘...?’

He really is the descendent.

It is apparent once you catch a glimpse at him.

The presence of the being that arrived from the sky.

The presence could still be felt vividly.

The words said about being the sole descendant of the dragon.

The real meaning in the words could be deciphered.

‘Is he... not a human?’

The Master was never a human.

Of course, he did have the figure similar to that of a human.

He had a face and a body similar to humans.

He had two hands and two legs.

If he had any exceptions...

‘Wings and a... tail?’

So he had a human body but possessed wings and a tail. Truly spectacular wings and a tail were present. Those huge wings... These weren’t wings that were covered with beautiful feathers. Instead, they resembled roughly stretched branches with red scales that anyone could sense the brutality they held.

‘The tail is like a weapon.’

Ragnar felt that the tail looked more brutal. It was a red scaly tail with sharp horns of irregular size. The limbs of human beings could be torn even if it was whipped just once.

“So you are Ragnar Greenriver?”

This was the first time since his birth that he witnessed something of such extremity.

Even then, he still didn’t lose the smile.

This was a monster with immense power in front of him.

It was a must to catch this thing.

“I’m Ragnar Greenriver, the 5th prince of the Greenriver family. It is my honor to meet the descendant of the dragon.”

The Master stared at Ragnar with expressionless eyes. They were not pupils that any human could ever have. They seemed reptilian, like a crocodile’s or a reptile’s.



The reason why Ian left ‘Day Break’ was more varied than his thoughts. As mentioned earlier, there were good reasons, but the most important reason was different. This was the guild where Crude was a devout believer.

‘I do not mind.’

‘Landeur denomination’, which is the imperial states religion, but is rejected by the other kinds. He immediately became a believer of the denomination. In the time he had to spare, he would read the Bible and remind himself that he was mortal. In other words, according to Crude’s words, the dragon’s denomination must be rejected.

‘Am I supposed to be more aggressive in collecting the information?’

‘Now what’s left is... ’

Just now, I have started a project. This task is same as the Taisan. First, there is a need to decentralize the power of the Ivory Tower so that there will be freedom to act. Ian had no intentions of being in a room and working on paperwork.

‘I cannot solely rely on the Guild of Thieves. From my perspective, it is good to question. Not to mention that I need the knowledge of the fairy queen.’

He had thoughts that there was more work to do.

Immediately, he remembered the promise that he heard from the fairy queen.

‘The requests that you might have, I’ll listen to them for a week... ’

The request of that lady who wished to live in the form of a human. To do it is not an easy feat. I can speak the truth with my family, but others are a problem. The guardians and the maids, I need to take into account their gazes.

‘Strange rumors might pop up.

There is an exceptional beauty and she can be seen in the Ivory Tower and Tower Lord’s house! This would create too many rumors...

I think I’m getting busier.’

Ian took a breath at that moment.

A communication sphere decorated with a snout was present, and a voice could be heard from within.

“Mom?”

‘This was very strange as everyone in the mansion would be sound asleep. But why was she contacting via communication device? What does she need?’

[Ian? Did you go out at this time?]

From the communication port, his mom’s voice could be heard. The voice sounded a little drowsy, but it wasn’t a big deal today.

“I went sightseeing for a while. Did you need anything?”

[It’s nothing. But people have been coming to the Ivory Tower. The Ivory Tower’s communication... Did you leave the towers telecommunication? The Tower Lord forgot about the communication?]

In the Ivory Tower, private communication lines were allowed.

[So I would like to have a communication facility. Don’t tell anyone, pretend it’s an ornamental fixture.]

5 years ago, Ian gave his mother a high-performance communication port because of her request.

‘Of course, since I’m at the Ivory Tower now, it isn’t much of a luxury anymore.’

[The mages asked me to inform you once you came. Come to the north gate as soon as possible. It looked like the soldiers were also crowded around... do you think anything dangerous is happening?]

The north gate was the front gate of the capital.

“Don’t worry.”

[I will worry.]

“In this world, the only one who would worry about a 6th class mage would be his mother and no one else. So sleep comfortably. Ah, and the cat, Espel, make sure to keep it by your side.”

[Of course. What if it is already beside me?]

“Then I’m glad.”

‘If the fairy queen is present in the mansion, then it should be safe.’

“Summoning the Spirit of Horses Unicorn.”

As a result of Ian hiding his staff, his robe could not be adorned. Thanks to the free fly order that was in effect, he could summon the unicorn, else it would have been impossible.

Taktak! Taktak! Taktak!

It felt like a problem arose after speaking with his mom. Many soldiers were currently gathered near the north gate. The emergency alarm could not be heard, but it seemed like it could go off any moment now.

“Tower Lord, we have been waiting.”

The capital’s north gate was crowded.

They were all the mages of the Ivory Tower who were waiting for Ian.

“What is going on?”

Ian urgently asked after getting down from his unicorn.

Chapter 78

Slow Client (1)

“We are keeping an eye on that monster approaching the north gate. As soon as the first report came in via the telecommunications server, I dispatched people to every town to confirm it.”

“A monster, you say?”

‘What is this monster that everyone is talking about?’

Can a monster just pop out?’

“The report stated that it looked like a boney undead lizard. It was slow and didn’t seem to be attacking any humans... by now, the first team should’ve reached their position.”

‘A boney lizard walking on two feet?’

Could be a one-of-a-kind thing.’

The monster that was seen underground of the Ivory Tower in the past.

No, the line from the Dragonian household.

‘Then, a dragon?’

As Ian was searching for a possible explanation, his mind came up with a dragon. It is difficult to be certain, but typically, in these cases, an unexpected scenario was never out of the question.

“What’s its exact location?”

“It’s approaching from the Imperial capital’s direction. It crossed Rolf Village and...”

Ian stared at the gate attached to the road. Its exact location was a little off the mark from the south gate. Already, countless mages from the Imperial Forces were gathered in the middle of the south gate. Little by little, formations were being made.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The aggressive magic of the mages was very strong. The 'boney lizard' could be described as a body with large bones. Only the head of the 'boney lizard' looked like a skull, but overall, the body was that of a human.

"What, what...!"

One eye was focusing on the attacks of the mages, but not a single bone was wavering on the boney lizard. It was like virtually every attack was being absorbed.

'Isn't it better to stay away from this?'

"Doesn't make any sense..."

"I-I'm not dreaming, am I?"

These were the agitated words of the mages; they didn't know what kind of action the monster would take. It was only moving forward. Its destination was the capital of the empire, Greenriverdum.

"Prepare to use ice wall."

The absence of Ian was abnormal, so a few senior mages who were ahead took the liberty to command the rest of the mages. In the middle of nowhere, all the mages were pouring out their abilities to halt the advance of the boney creature.

"Spread out in all directions!"

The solid barriers of ice were summoned, surrounding the boney monster from all four cardinal directions. It could no longer move.

Bang!

The walls of ice were wailing.

Kwang!

Sounds of the barrier that was breaking from the inside could be heard.

Bang! Kwang! Bang!

The lizard managed to penetrate the wall.

Not only a single layer, but all the layers of the barrier.

Bang!

It is difficult for even siege weapons to break through the wall, but it was an easy feat to accomplish for the boney monster.

And he was back on track to head towards the Imperial capital.

But he was still not attacking any humans.

“Where the hell is the monster...?”

Senior Mage Ronan muttered as he lost his cool. This was the first time that he saw a monster like this. Even when the mages were constantly attacking it, it was not counter-attacking.

‘And where the hell is the monster going?’

“Excuse me!”

The mages were getting ready before entering, followed by the Imperial army in the rear. The Imperial army horseback riders were divided into two teams and were on the move. With horses equipped with chains, the riders continued to mount dozens of attacks in an effort to trip the monster.

“Heiiiiiiing!”

After waiting for a moment, the horses that were running lifted their front feet and cried out. While running, they began to tighten the chains around the boney monster, but it wasn’t being dragged.

Thousand of attacks were launched, but the monster couldn't be taken down.

"It, it doesn't make any sense..."

The mages of the Ivory Tower greeted the monster with a sophisticated look after witnessing the scenario, but the Imperial army was overwhelmed with embarrassment. One thought surfaced to mind.

"Support has arrived..."

The siege army and many mages stepped onto the field, but their efforts were fruitless. Nothing was able to be accomplished.

"For starters, step back."

The moment when helplessness filled the advancement team.

Everyone heard the voice, making them relieved.

The voice was amplified with mana.

"Tower lord...?"

The kind of support which would help mitigate the overwhelming difference, also known as the most powerful weapon of the empire. The Ivory Tower's Ian Page was arriving on scene with a pure white unicorn.

"Tower Lord has been late!"

"All of you back off! We have come from the Ivory Tower!"

Ian got down from the unicorn and stepped in front of the enormous boney monster. The skull of the monster was more similar to that of a lizard, so this was what he expected.

'Dragon.'

It was larger than what was previously seen underground in the Ivory Tower, but

compared to its size, it seems more powerful than before. It was clear that this was a dragon. No, to be precise...

‘It was an empty shell’

Just as the fairy queen had explained, its physical appearance was akin to an empty shell. The body had no soul.

‘By any chance, did he come for revenge?’

There were only two possible answers for moving towards Greenriverdum, the Imperial capital. One, was to get Ian, while the other was to find the fairy queen who came from a similar lineage.

‘First, let’s halt its advance.’

They advanced towards the monster to stop it. No one wanted the dragon’s shell to reach the city. It was the same for Ian. Otherwise, won’t a lot of disturbances arise?

‘If physical force is not enough to stop it...

We should take care of the advances that are being made.

There are additional methods to stop it.’

“Entangle.”

The entangle spell invoked vines from the ground. Though it was a low class spell, when a 6th class mage used it, it was a different story. Ian touched the floor with his staff, and many vines came out from the below and flooded to the top. The mages were surprised at the vastness of the spell.

“That is ‘entangle,’ right...?”

The mages’ confusion was one matter, but what about the Imperial army soldiers were wholly unfamiliar? They stared at the spell Ian casted with their mouths wide open. No need to think about the mages, since their bodies were stiff as if paralyzed.

“Catch it.”

One word from Ian.

A word that people could not have heard cleared through the numerous vines. The vines immediately locked onto the empty shell dragon and rushed towards it. The boney lizard's limbs, neck, and body were covered by the vines.

Ujik! Ujijik!

Though there were numerous vines, it didn't seem to be sufficient. The dragon lifted its arms, and the vines were uprooted. It indeed possessed great strength. It was a different opponent than the one from the Ivory Tower in the past.

"Summoning."

Ian was definitely not done. He calmly drew a circle. He wanted to use a complicated spell to summon the spirit of a wolf, a unicorn, or a salamander; something that was summoned began coming out of the circle.

"The eternal spirit of Earth, Noice."

The higher spirit of Earth, 'Noice'

A giant with earthly skin came out.

Its size was not much less compared to the dragon's.

"Noice, below that creature."

With a brief command, the large body surfaced from the floor. How many seconds have passed since then? A big palm surfaced from underneath the feet of the dragon who was tearing the vines apart. The hands of Noice became lightly tattered.

"Bury."

The command from Ian was brief.

But Noice understood the command and immediately grabbed both ankles of the dragon.

Kung! Kkung! Khyuung!

And it started to drag the dragon into the ground before squeezing it into a pit.

There was no hesitation, no clogging.

The pit was the will of Noice.

The pit wasn't a result of force, but the result of sincerity.

“ ... ”

Even the mages who were familiar with this spell were astonished. Witnessing this sight, what words could they mutter?

The boney monster which didn't even stop for a second despite being buried in numerous magic spells before was now buried in an instant.

“Haah!”

Ian gave out a huge sigh and proceeded towards the pit.

To finish it off.

“Cio Oiv Lava”

Ian was calling for lava to submerge the pit.

There was no way for the dragon to remain inside lava.

(Fairies... Queen... with... human being?)

A voice appeared inside Ian's head.

It sounded similar to that of the fairy queen.

But it definitely wasn't the voice of a woman.

It was a heavy and slow-paced voice.

‘...?’

Ian thought of him from the order.

And he peered at the face of the dragon.

The dragon was looking out from the pit.

His gnarled eyes were now a little blue.

‘A soul?’

In the past when they met the dragon in the underground of the Ivory Tower, the fairy queen stared into the eyes of the dragon and informed him of the absence of its soul before telling him to attack it freely.

Previously, the boney eyes were empty, but a blue shine was now present in them.

“It’s not a shell after all?”

Said Ian after lowering his body. And he did not forget to cast the silence spell. It was an intangible spell and the mana was sprinkled on the land. Fortunately, nobody could notice that.

(The shell... is talking... like this. Right now... I’m... not an... empty shell. The shell... had the..... name Sparto.)

A slow-paced walk along with suitable words. Suddenly, he recalled the words that the fairy queen stated in the Ivory Tower in the past. Wouldn’t it have been nice to not hear the frustrating voice of the empty shell?

‘That is what happened.’

Without realizing it, Ian nodded his head.

The dragon spoke about ‘Sparto’.

There was a lot that he wanted to ask, and now was a good time.

“What is the reason for you to come here?”

He had to ask about it, and he chose what to ask.

(To... meet... the fairy... Queen.)

“The queen?”

(Tough to... understand... the reason. Wish... to talk with opponents... no one other than her... need to find her only.)

Ian heard till that and then began to look around.

‘I knew that something was the matter with the dragon.’

Now he understood that it was here to meet someone, but that created a new problem; he was not the enemy.

‘How do I get him out?’

There were many eyes that were watching.

More will arrive soon.

This was not a situation to share the story.

“Firstly, I understand that you have come to meet with the fairy queen. The problem is that this is the wrong way. What are we supposed to do if you come here like this?”

(There was... no other way.)

Okay. There was no other way.

But it wasn’t necessary to continue like this.

‘How to circumvent this situation... ’

Ian didn't see a way out.

(There... must... be... one... way out.)

"What way?"

(It is... simple.)

After replying, the dragon didn't move a muscle. Instead, the blue light emitting from the skull disappeared. The soul that was inside its body looked like it was coming out of the shell.

(Please... process it. Your... magic... can... damage... the empty shell.)

The weakened shell would end by the process. That was what the words of the dragon meant. It was much smarter than he thought, compared to the his slow speech.

"Cio Oiv Lava."

Ian summoned the lava, and it began flow inside. As scorching hot lava was filling the pit, Senior Mage Deckard arrived on the scene.

"What is happening? The monster?"

Deckard was in charge of the reinforcements.

He asked Ronan.

"Whatever... I think it is over."

"What? How?"

"The Tower Lord..."

Deckard took a closer look at the scene before his eyes.

There was a large and deep pit with smoke arising out of it.

He just missed the monster that was in the pit.

“Hooo...”

Deckard wasn't able to witness the entire situation. The Tower Lord solved it by himself, and that was all there was to it. Ronan, on the other hand, had the privilege of viewing it directly.

He witnessed the overwhelming power difference of the 6th class mage.

“It was more of a monster... than what I thought.”

Ronan was furiously murmuring.

“A monster? The monster talks?”

Deckard sensed something and asked.

“No, the Tower Lord. The new head of ours.”

Ronan shook his head and answered.

At that voice, he was stunned.

The 6th class which had only been recently measured and recorded.

And the 6th class just a while back he had witnessed with his eyes.

‘Do I have the courage to reach it?’

There was a lot of gap in the power.

“The lord of Ivory Tower, I seem to have regained my senses. I'm certain that what he displayed, that power...”

If that kind of power was witnessed, one will have a desire to reach the pinnacle. Specifically, Ronan, the senior mage. In the entirety of all mages, is there no one who can be classified as a genius? But even a genius will feel overwhelmed in this case; however, he did not even desire to reach that level.

“Deckard.”

“I’m listening.”

“If you won’t mind... I plan on following him.”

“What do you mean?”

The endless suggestion of Ronan.

The suggestion was simple.

“From now on, everything that he does, I hope to follow. Whatever it is... he seems to have transcended beyond humanity.”

Ronan’s eyes peered in that direction.

Ivory Tower’s Ian Page.

Chapter 79

Slow Client (2)

Outside the south gate, a widespread disturbance occurred. The new tower lord, 'Ian Page', presented a brilliant debut. There wasn't a single person who conducted a large-scale investigation about the monsters under King Terry Greenriver.

(Why the hell did this frustrating thing come here?)

(From the beginning... was looking... for the thing...)

(Ah! Irritating. Irritating!)

Alongside Ian was a soul with a blue body. The dragon "Sparto's" soul was unexpectedly as the fairy queen said it would be.

No, rather than the premonition, he was more excited about the fight. It didn't seem like either of them were pleased to meet the other.

"So."

Ian interrupted the argument and asked Sparto, "Is there a problem?"

Now that it was his time to talk, Ian was frustrated with the way it was talking, but he endured it.

(From the moment... their traces were... sensed... I was in a deep sleep. It wasn't long... before I... woke up.)

(Speak quickly, please! Quickly!)

"Queen, be quiet."

The poor queen, destined to not be quiet even when she needed to. She was blowing

on both sides of the communications orb and placed it back on top of the table while listening to the story of the dragon.

(In your expression... the empty shell... the body... I made... the empty shell... on my... own will. Even if you... people try... to make... the shell body... it will be impossible... to do. But)

The dragon spoke slowly, frequently stopping between phrases. It seemed like it was having a hard time speaking.

(From the moment... I woke up... I have been able to detect its presence.)

“What presence were you able to detect?”

(The one I don’t remember... making... the body)

This was what the dragon said.

The body that he never made.

The story of the presence of the shell that it was able to detect.

That it could feel as soon as it woke up from its hundred-years nap.

(I read and remembered the... memory fragments... of the body... that were carved... underground. What kind of existence... made my body... and I don’t understand... why it’s there... But... I see you and... fairy queen.)

The fragmented body in the basement of the old Ivory tower was the skeleton warrior that was shattered by Ian’s magic.

(I don’t know... the whereabouts... of the other people... but I followed the... fairy dust and... that’s how I got here.)

“Why didn’t you come in your soul form?”

(To sense... the energy of the dust. Can only... detect things... in the physical being... and I apologize for... making a fuss. But I didn’t... hurt humans.)

“That I know. I’m thankful for that.”

The way the fairy queen respects humans differs a lot from Sparto.

Not respect, but it could be a different emotion. I’m glad that it didn’t hurt anyone.

“To sum it up, you felt the presence of the skeletal warrior and in its’ memories, you saw the queen and myself. And you came all the way here, by following the fairy dust, to discuss the problem, right?”

(That is... correct.)

Ian grasped the entire situation of the dragon. But there wasn’t anything that he could do. Other than the fact that the dragon’s name was Sparto, he didn’t know much else.

“Does the queen have a guess?”

(Hmm, I’m not sure. Wasn’t it a mistake? Who here would have made that body? And it is impossible for them. As his skull is empty, his memories seemed to have followed him.)

The queen was indeed no help at this moment.

“Although, you have come a long way, I don’t think I can tell you anything that will help you.”

(It is alright... It is natural for you... to not know... And it is... natural for the... fairy queen to be... ignorant about it too.)

(What did you say?! This guy!)

“Queen. Be quiet.”

(Why are you only asking me...!)

The fairy queen went silent again.

And Ian’s voice continued.

“I don’t know if this helps, but what I can tell you is that I received magic from the place where the body was.”

(Magic...?)

“Would you like me to show you?”

Ian asked the dragon.

He was unsure about whether there would be any after effects of this magic. While Ian prepared the spell, the fairy queen’s shoulders shook slightly.

(Show... me.)

“Magic like this”

Ian cast the spell ‘Order of household’.

At the same time, golden mana started to spew.

(No way...?)

“It is said to be the ‘Power of the Household’”

(Power of... the household...)

The dragon was at a loss for words. It was a soul made of light but, Ian felt like it was trying to weigh something.

(Indeed, I can... feel power... from you. It is the same... as their power... This is... the power of... the household.)

Like the fairy queen, Sparto too, could feel the power that was radiating from Ian. That is, Ian had possibly become a member of the household.

(If it is like... this, even the fairy... queen couldn’t... resist your words?)

The dragon was speaking continuously, in a voice that had achieved enlightenment.

Yet it was still as slow as a tortoise.

(The fact that... the power... has been given means... something great. I think I... got it right.)

“Do you know anything about it?”

(No. Their will... is incalculable... But just... follow. The shield... the head... and the household...)

But unlike the Fairy Queen, the dragon quickly acknowledged the present situation.

‘Although I still wonder why humans are able to possess the power of dragons, this dragon has figured out a clue as to the identity of the makers of its shell.’

‘I want a sequel.’

Words with a slow tone that matched well with a relaxed attitude. Dragon and Fairy Queen, although they were from the same household, can there be such a large difference between them?

(It is a spectacular... sight to see the... Queen of Fairies... live with limbs like the... human beings.)

(Aren’t you the same?)

(I have no... dissatisfaction as... I respect... their will. However you... seem to have a... lot than before. Dissatisfaction...)

(Human! Command this creature to speak its thoughts quickly! Wouldn’t that be good for you too? If you have ears! Ugh!)

Ian stared as the two members of the same household fought and thought that there was nothing much he could do.

‘Okay, let’s try to raise the level of expression a little higher. The level is low. Don’t you feel it when you look at me?’

‘The power that you possess is the real problem here.’

Although the level of their quarrel is low, the power that they possess isn't that demeaning.

I have already witnessed the power of the soul-bearing dragon at the northern gate.

It was surely able to absorb a combined attack from the mages unit. That was power so brilliant, you could brag about it. If they were constantly fighting, Ian suspected that he wouldn't be able to win against it.

'The dragonian seems a little similar to me. It could be much stronger too.'

The power of the households was similar.

The manifestation of the lightning magic by the fairy queen was the level of a 6th class. It was stronger even if it was all by itself. But her true strength lies in her 'clan'.

Couldn't she lead the fairy clans, which number in the hundreds? But there were not enough people to support her.

'It was different from the past life. Quite a lot of things were.'

In the past life, Ian had not encountered such strong beings.

He directly researched about dragons through the fairy queen. This was the first time he either saw or heard about another dragon's household.

'In this life, I'm always in a knot.'

Is it because I already researched the dragon chant?

Is it because he already used dragon chant?

'The side effects of turning back time.'

The Dragon chants, turning back time.

A boxed case that will never open.

Yet I feel like I have opened that box.

‘From now on, a lot of things might change.’

A gap between the previous life and the present life.

The differences are becoming larger.

‘I will get involved in a lot more things.’

I could assure you if this was a flow.

Relationship with the people of the household that was not present in the previous life.

Understanding the broadness of the dragon chants.

The strength of the household that I need to possess.

Revival up to the level of that person.

‘... that’s why I was in a hurry.’

Ian came to realize it just now.

The dissatisfaction that he felt recently.

Rushing due to slow growth.

Causes for emotional relief.

Until now, I was feeling impatient, but I could not understand why I was impatient.

With the death of the previous Ivory Tower lord, Herbert, Ragnar also got his wings clipped. There was no reason to be impatient. If I wait for 2 to 3 years, my mana heart will end up growing in a relaxed manner.

‘Stronger beings exist. The dragons that are members of this household will be involved in my life until the revival of humankind.’

And that was the cause.

The intervention of those beings in Ian's life.

Ian was very strong, but there were even stronger beings.

And such beings exist in Heaven and Earth.

'From here, the process of growth cannot be stopped.'

There was one thing that was certain.

'I couldn't even guess it at the current speed.

I need to be stronger than my current state.

No, I need to get much stronger than my previous life.

I was very relaxed.

I should just get the dragonian's information.

I should just wait for the elixir to be produced.

I just want to see the effects of the elixir.

Is that all?

What more am I supposed to do at the moment?'

The benefits of regression. Yourself.

High-level magical knowledge.

Your own technique for mana breathing.

Help from elixir and artifacts.

By depending on the memories of his past life, Ian could grow at a fast pace. As a result, though the growth of his body was stagnant, he could only use the elixir to grow his magic.

‘I’m not a mage that has accomplished the 8th class level.’

Ian forgot the fundamental problem.

He came back with the use of Dragon chants.

The past life of Ian as his present life?

No, it is a lot more difficult to express it.

He wasn’t a 42-year-old 8th class mage.

He was an 18-year-old 6th class mage.

His body was not the same as his past life.

‘I have not yet reached that level.’

This was a different world than his previous life.

Maybe it was an illusion.

Ian was the one who was living in the present.

That was an important thing.

‘The present is the problem, and the present as the memories.’

The growth of the mana heart is an unknown area.

There was no use of the old life.

He had dramatically achieved 6th class.

It was Ian who was looking back at the time.

In Pieric, he almost died.

Escaping the head of an enormous monster, Ian poured it all out.

Mana, fundamental stamina, and mental stability. Three days in a dying state, just enough to miss death.

‘The more one uses the body, the more it grows.’

Is the mana heart the same way?

‘I’ve been thinking about it, and judged it as an inefficient and unsustainable method.

But looking at this once again, it didn’t seem to be an impossible task to perform.’

‘Training and training.’

A training that pushes oneself to the limit.

How long has it been since I remembered that word?

It was Ian who was feeling a little awe.

‘It is worth a try.’

Until recently he considered it as impossible.

The enemies were staring at him from every direction.

But now it was possible.

‘It is rather now.’

This may be an opportunity presented to Ian.

A little blurry but a friendly, distinct situation.

‘Not sure how long it will last.’

At least some time to relax was given to him.

“Mr. Sparto.”

His decisions were firmly set.

Hearing the low voice that called out to him the dragon asked.

(Did you... call me?)

At the call of Ian, the dragon stopped squabbling with the queen and immediately answered. Since he did not have the right to deny having a conversation, Ian spoke with more force than compared with the household.

“This time, the body in which the soul is born has a mighty power. Aggressive magic cannot be used against it, almost as if it could absorb the shock, am I right?”

(Of course... I am a shield of theirs... a gatekeeper for their... territory and I’m fortunate... to be their flesh... and spirit.)

(What! Indomitable flesh! In a room of full of lighting, the bone will also split.)

Both Ian and the dragon ignored the fairy queen’s remarks.

“Perhaps can you endure my attack spells?”

(At your level... it won’t be much... of a major feat to accomplish.)

Ian’s attack spell wasn’t tough.

It indeed was a matter of pride.

Even though he couldn’t accept it.

He was already stuck at the moment.

“There’s one thing. Does the dragon also feel pain?”

(I don't... know what... that means.)

There was a slight bluff that could be felt in the voice of the dragon.

He was sure that it knew what it meant.

"Please look forward to it."

Both eyes of Ian were shining.



Breaking through your limits by training.

It was simple, but it was a difficult idea for Ian.

With that goal, he proceeded quickly to the Ivory Tower.

Why hurry to the Ivory Tower?

"On vacation."

"Sorry? What was that...?"

"For half a year, from now until the inception of the Pieric Alliance, on the authority from the state, Sir Ronan and Sir Deckard are temporarily on vacation. The two senior mages in Ivory Tower wouldn't be much of a problem. However."

Ian was on vacation.

And the reason for it was spectacular.

It was 'closed-door training'.

Just like when the previous Tower Lord took a vacation to focus on black magic, in the same manner, Ian also took a vacation to focus on his mana heart.

Ronan and Deckard, who were working in the Ivory Tower, were also given leave.

“Then.”

For the first time, in the long time that he had been at the Ivory Tower, Ian was on an off-season vacation, and his next stop was the Imperial Palace.

If it's not good for the Ivory Tower, the emperor has the right to refuse any requests if there's a valid reason.

“So, what did you wish to discuss, Tower Lord?”

Ian has used the authority that he possessed to summon the king for a meeting.

This was a place where one would be nervous because the opponent was wise and shrewd, even though this was different from the past. Ian brought exactly what was needed and spoke without a hitch.

“Your Highness, I have something to ask you.”

“Please, it has been 6 years already. Do speak.”

“I need land.”

“Land, you say?”

“To be precise, I want an abandoned land.”

The first thing that Ian searched for was a ‘suitable place’. He needed a good place in which a 6th class mage could pour out his magic like crazy. It would be better if the land was wide and abandoned.

“Being a mage who unfolds magic around yourself, I don't think there will be any abandoned land that is present.”

“You don't have to worry about that. There is a method to absorb the direct hits from the magic. Only, I need a location where the aftermath of spells would not be a problem.”

Of course, he didn't talk about Sparto's ability to absorb blows.

“Hmmm.”

After listening to the request of Ian, the emperor had a concern.

“A land that can be used for such a purpose, there is a place that matches your desires. It is not too far away. It was originally a village. Its’ name is... was it Cross Village?”

Cross Village was southwest of the Capital, which was not far from here. It was flourishing until a few decades ago when pests took over, halting the growth of the village. It was then abandoned.

Ian received the barren land from the emperor.



‘Much easier than I thought.’

From the beginning of his vacation, Ian received the land and was using it for the purpose of practice. It was a full-fledged ambition from his heart to take action. He was motivated and he was flaring with passion.

‘I should have done this before.’

‘Since I came back to the past, was there a moment where I was purely ambitious? I don’t think there was. By using my past memories, the way becomes faster and easier. I have been calculating these situations.’

Except for a few things, his focus on life was very well-aligned.

‘This kind of thing is not bad.’

Ian didn’t know how to stop himself from walking.

The soul of the dragon Sparto that was in the southwest land went straight to the old village of Cross.

I’m getting started on training from today onwards. Training to develop the mana heart.

(It's a dead... land.)

They arrived at Cross Village, but it was completely barren.

'Do you think that a dragon will help you? Not too long ago, all the agricultural plans were prohibited. This was the land that received the worst damage.'

(What should... I do to help?)

"Just a moment, first things first."

Ian looked around.

Thoroughly, very thoroughly. Of course, it was a rare land lacking humans.

So being thorough wasn't such a bad thing.

'We should cover it properly.'

Ian put his right palm on the earth that was covered with black soil. And at the same moment, he started to memorize one chant.

"Earth Wall."

And at that time, a barrier of sand started to rise.

The scale of this was only slightly higher than the ice wall that Ian placed in the past; the length was much longer, but it wasn't straight.

"Hmm..."

The barrier of the earth that appeared was in a square shape.

Ian was stuck inside the barrier.

"This seems fine."

It was a square training room.

It was completely perfect.

No one can peer inside this.

“Now this... empty, can you show me the body?”

(Have my bones been brought?)

“Of course. Here.”

Sparto needed its bones as a definite condition to form its body.

It would have been nice to be informed earlier because since I was given the information a moment too late, I had to sneak into the investigation site of the southern gate.

‘There was no way it would be fine in lava.’

The dragon’s bones were fine. As the lava hardened, its original form was preserved. It was very formidable.

(Now let me... implant my bone.)

“Just implanting it is enough?”

Upon the request of Sparto, Ian planted one bone into the ground. The blue soul-containing light was also seeping into the ground.

Khukukuku...!

‘How long am I supposed to wait for this?’

Ian could sense a huge vibration under his feet.

Jwak!!

The first thing that popped out was the spear and holding the spear came the hand.

Sparto was carrying the spear in the same way I carried it, and the tip of the spear

pierced the ground.

Jwak! Jwak! Psh.....

The other hand appeared and grabbed the ground, and a lizard-shaped skull also popped out.

The bone structure was similar to that of a human. But, if there was a problem...

‘The color is not as expressive as I thought.’

Slowly, it formed the shape of a tough guy.

It was the indomitable body and mind.

(My body that... you wanted.)

Of course, the body that was rising up from the soil and the exorcism of the dragon Sparto was a little while ago. Even lava was useless against the body.

‘No, isn’t it a bone?’

“Finally, I have another question to ask.”

(What is... it.)

“You really don’t feel pain?”

(I told you... that I don’t know... what pain means.)

“A regular feeling of hurt.”

(My will is... unbreakable.)

“That’s nice.”

‘Does it really not feel pain?’

A question that was lingering on the mind for quite a while.

'If it can't feel, then I will have to find another way.'

"From now on."

Ian was far away from the Dragon.

And carefully continued to speak.

"Mr. Sparto, the thing that you have to do is simple."

Ian continued to speak.

"The indomitable body and spirit. The power and the sense of pride."

A massive wave of mana swirled around Ian's entire body.

"Endure various types of magic."

(Various magic... are different?)

"If I'm exhausted."

From Ian's mouth was a satisfactory voice.

"You can keep your side from then on."

It was only a few days ago.

Ian was ignorant of this method.

But he discovered an efficient method.

This was based on the memories from his past life.

An elixir with a tremendous effect.

An artifact with a fantastic power and strength.

And it's going to be different this time.

There was no previous life and the difficulty of this life.

The problem with the growth of the mana heart.

I will proceed through it a little differently.

“Till I find the family.”

The first training session in this life.

And the starting point of it was magic.

Chapter 80

Slow Client (3)

By now, half of the 6 month long vacation had passed.

Ian had already reached the 88th day of training. The training ground was the same way as it had been on the first day.

Khuoong!

Dragon Sparto's massive spear fell to the earth.

The dirt spread out as if there was an explosion. It has been a while since this has happened, and as far as the destructive power was concerned, there was not much difference when compared with magic.

"Huh!"

Ian quickly stepped away just one beat faster than the spear before it struck. At that very moment, an order was given, which filled the air with cold energy, forming shackles of ice.

'Frozen Shackles.'

The dragon was definitely very strong and it briskly raised the spear.

From the hand holding the spear all the way to the shoulder, the dragon's entire arm was completely frozen. If it was a human, the whole body would've been frozen, however the dragon had an anti-magic innate ability and thus only one side of its body froze.

'Ice Boom.'

I'll have to let go of the goal for this moment. Before that, it was better to consume the mana from the explosion.

Ian's first purpose was to check the extent of his 'Mana consumption'.

Bobong! Bong!

The cluttered ice on the dragon's right hand exploded and scattered innumerable debris everywhere.

If it had been flesh, the explosion that Ian made would've turned them into chunks, yet despite this, the dragon Sparto's bony body was fine without a single scratch.

"Battlefield."

Its durability exceeded the common sense.

To Ian, this was a familiar sight.

He didn't even hesitate and continued to cast his magic.

His magic didn't work well, so it was time for 'weather magic'.

"Winter."

Battlefield, winter. With the recitation, the season began to change, and snow clouds started to appear in the sky, even generating cold winds.

"Ice Zone."

Ian's command didn't end there. From the tip of the cane, a wide range of cold energy was spread. The whole layer of soil on the earth became covered with ice.

"Huu...!"

As if to represent the cold weather, Ian's breath was all over the place. Though it was spring on the outside with cherry blossoms blooming everywhere, it wasn't the case in the training ground. Winter had indeed found its way inside.

"The cold is nice."

Each mage had a different taste in martial arts.

Like the detained Helen who had flame magic, Ian had his own flavor.

Ice and cold. A stage that matched the cool taste decorated the training area. The stage of magic with a theme.

Kwah! Kwaaaaah! Kwaah!

Is this how the fish met the water?

Ian did just one hand gesture, yet a curved ice pillar popped up everywhere like a snake.

The environmental factors of winter and ice played a role in the creation of the ice pillar.

(Ice plate... again.)

At this sight came Sparto's dissatisfied voice.

All of a sudden, the impact was absorbed. He didn't even seem to feel any kind of mental fatigue and its only weakness was that its movement was much slower on this icy road.

(I wasn't able to... at first.)

Dragon Sparto smashed all the ice pillars that crept up all over the place. Each time the spear was swirled, the thick ice columns were broken into pieces.

(But a human... like this.)

The dragon also had emotions. Not like the ups and downs of joy and anger from the Fairy Queen, but sadness and boredom were the basic emotions that it could feel. The feelings that it felt at the moment was 'wow'.

(If I knew... I would.)

It was enough. 88 long days. Ian's opponent for the 88 days. No, being an opponent was just a word, but actually, it wasn't much different from a scarecrow. By now he

knew to move, but sometimes Sparto was just like a scarecrow who wielded one arm at a time.

(I would not have... found you.)

Without any hesitation, Dragon Sparto wielded his spear. Who would you blame now? He awoke in this situation, it was his own mistake that made such an odd flow.

(This is... their... will.)

Thinking like that made him feel a little better. Perhaps loyalty to the dragon was the top priority of the household.

(Dull man. If it was me I would have already fed me.)

Meanwhile, there was a crowd watching the crash of Ian and Sparta's fight, Vanessa and Ledio and Douglas. Even the Fairy Queen was there in her human form. He saw half an elixir and a full recovery potion in the back.

(You are just disgracing your household!)

"Household? Queen. What was that?"

(Hmm? Ah, there is a thing like that. You humans can not even understand it. Don't be interested.)

"Yeah..."

Until recently, the relationship between the Fairy Queen and Vanessa had been one of an owner and her cat. These people continued their conversation, watching the training from a protected area that was far away behind a barrier made of soil, although it was much closer than they thought.

(To put it simply, in the way that humans belonged to a state, it's the same for the body and the bones. Of course, it's the same as you dividing the ranks, since the body is also different from the bones. If I was a member of the royal family, that guy would be a slave. Slave.)

Ian had confessed the identity of the Fairy Queen to his family. Of course, as the member of the dragon household, he didn't give out such detailed information to them. He only told her that she was the queen of the fairy race and was helping him.

“Is that so. Then the queen and the one over there...”

(The boney dagger guy.)

“No. Like you... Mr Sparto is not a monster then? Like a goblin...”

(What? I am majestic!)

“Apologies, apologies! I made a mistake...!”

Of course, there was no other way out there yet. Only when she was with family members was she allowed to appear in a human form. This was only a temporary measure, for a well behaved Fairy Queen.

(Ah, No need. Don't be mistaken. We haven't interacted with a human for quite a long time. There is no turning back now.)

Rather, Vanessa's words were slightly stubborn. For the Fairy Queen, only her outspoken words were authoritative, but her behaviour was not authoritative at all. Is it because of the affection that the pet cat was receiving from Vanessa?

‘I felt it since I first saw, I cannot feel a spot like that. This is the first time I have come across humans like them.’

The Fairy Queen was always intrigued by Vanessa's soul. Using her ‘Eyes of Magi’ power, no matter when she looked at Vanessa, the results were consistent. To express it in words, it was the same as ‘a clean human with no dirt’.

‘Definitely interesting.’

It was the Fairy Queen's first time meeting a human like Vanessa. The male human in front of us, Ledio, had stains. The same is true for the son. Is it only Vanessa? Each and every human being is stained. Its' concentration was very small and will not be eroded.

‘In comparison, the son... ’

In reality, Ian was not a clean hearted person. Rather, he was stained dozens of times more than average humans' hearts. But the reason the Fairy Queen was able to trust Ian from the beginning was simple. The probability of getting eroded was zero.

‘It is hard to believe, but it looks like it. In my eyes.’

There were quite a few stains that will not be eroded and there was a clean soul

without any signs of stain. Both of these were indeed very rare for a human. Are these two really mother and son?

(The mother is a human.)

“Me?”

(There is one thing that I’m curious about.)

“Please speak. Whatever it may be.”

(Your son’s father, what was he...)

As the Queen was continuing her question, a voice interrupted her.

“Miss Queen.”

Listening to that sound felt like someone with a seizure was talking. But actually, it was the voice of Ian Page from far away whose mana was burning.

“Come in.”

These words from Ian were delivered through mana. At his words, the Fairy Queen’s small wings beat hard, appearing like a flower. She firmly believed that the expression she saw today was the most lively expression that she had ever witnessed.

(Okay, do not speculate!)

Like a shooting arrow, she flew to the centre of the training area at once.

From now on, it was the beginning of the second act.

Ian’s mana, physical strength, and mental power.

A type of training that consumed all 3 elements.

It was a 1:2 match.

“Ah...!”

Vanessa noticed the look and sighed.

Every day for the past 88 days, she was looking forward to seeing her son returning from the training ground, as the training with dragon Sparto was going fine. It wasn’t even possible to approach Ian, for these 88 long days have been tiring. The problem only began from now on. The training was to continue until the Fairy Queen gave out the feeling of burning passion.

“Gently, gently.”

Her hope did not reach the Fairy Queen. She had already flown to the centre when lightning was called out. Of course, there was a limitation. According to Ian’s orders, he could only summon a second class lightning. There weren’t many people and it didn’t hit the ground.

“ ... ”

Vanessa’s eyes calmed down slowly.

That lady was not the person that she talked to earlier.

She didn’t miss it at all.

She focused only on her son, Ian Page.

‘Please concentrate, concentrate.’

That way I can stop what I need.

I can cope with the exhaustion then.

‘Great.’

At this appearance of Vanessa, Ledio who was beside her was thrilled. No matter how delicate she might be, a mother was still a mother. While looking at her, Douglas was suddenly reminded of his birth mother.

‘The lady also... is a strong mother.’

Ledio was suddenly immersed in a thought. How long has it been from there? Suddenly, Vanessa left the protection zone. Thanks to this, Ledio came out from his line of thought.

“Mrs Page!”

Vanessa rushed forward with a potion because Ian had fallen. Now that she was able to adapt herself, Vanessa ran as if her life was at stake.

“Dear me!” “Shoot!”

Seeing this, both Ledio and Douglas started to run a little behind her. It was as cold as

if it was winter, yet the ice that had formed on the soil disappeared instantly. This was evidence that the consciousness of the castor had been cut off.

“Ian! Ian!”

He was not dead for sure.

It was impossible for him to be dead.

But tears started to flow from Vanessa’s eyes as she tried to make him drink the recovery potion.

“A little of this.”

Ledio who came late was watching the situation. Now it was time to carry Ian and return to their residence by taking the carriage that was outside the barrier. This routine had been repeating for quite a few days, with no surety on when this will end.

“This really is true training...”

This was Ledio’s very sincere feeling.

Not only Ledio, these were the thoughts of all those who were there.



Tok! Tok!

A very familiar bedroom.

Ian’s eyes slowly opened.

Today was the 89th day of training.

Tok! Toktok!

Ian checked his mana hear immediately after waking up. Mana, physical health, and mental stability were completely drained and faded. Looking at the movement of his mana heart after waking up was a routine that has been repeating for several days now.

‘Still...’

Ian shook his head.

Nothing had changed yet.

The feeling that he had at the initiation of 6th class.

That kind of beating of the heart that could not normally be felt.

‘Some kind of tingling sensation is there.’

The tingling sensation that started not long ago. This was surely what Ian could feel from his mana heart, which gave him hope. It was a tingle that was present up till the end.

“Hmm.”

The training had been repeating for quite a few days. This training that he didn’t try in his past life was something Ian was using to find new training methods that have not been discovered yet. Looking at this feeling of tingling there was a difference in it.

“Ugh.....!”

This was the first time that he felt like he was going to die. An intense pain hit Ian’s whole body when he tried to get up from the bed. His expression showed that his bones and muscles were stiff, while his organs felt like they were being shredded.

‘Mana’s protection is useless.’

Ian suddenly remembered the conversation between Oliver and Darion. If one forced their body to the limit, from a certain point onwards protect will no longer have an effect. I’m going to feel the pain of it. I certainly said so.

‘It was not real.’

Eventually, Ian lay down.

Without any thoughts, he looked at the ceiling.

It was fine even with the occasional blurring of his sight.

It felt like his brain was being reassembled.

Tok! Toktok!

At that moment, there was a sound.

The sound that was there before.

The sound was coming from the window.

Was there hail falling?

Toktok! Tok! Tok!

Ian turned his gaze towards the window.

Hail wasn't the cause for the sound.

There was a bird with very black feathers.

"Crow?"

There was a small note on the crow's leg, who was hitting the window with its beak. It looked like a professionally trained 'Communication Crow'.

'Ah, look at that.'

The 89th day since he requested an investigation using the thieves' guild.

He was told that there was something to report.

'Order of the Dragon.'

Ian walked through the window, enduring the pain, and unfolded the note that was brought by the crow outside his window.

Chapter 81

The Trap (1)

“Umm.”

The content of the note was very simple. There was no report, only an interesting message that said, ‘If you want an initial report, then come out in front of the mansion. If not, I will continue to investigate.’

“So...”

Seems like the story was that it might not be what he was looking for, but if he wanted to hear it, come out. Something subtle and interesting.

‘Let’s hear it.’

Ian stood up with determination. He took the vial from the table next to him and drank the painkiller that Douglas had made.

‘It is.’

If it had been a normal human, they would have thrown it away, since it was made with poison. Ian, however, had mana protection so there was nothing to worry about. The drug had a scent that spread all over and a bitter taste that he didn’t like.

‘Why is it this bitter?’

He had witnessed the preparation process and knew exactly what ingredients were used. Yet, it still tasted bitter. Will other people be able to swallow this potion without any doubts? Ian drank it because he knew the entire process. Unfortunately, there was no way to know the cause for this bitter taste.

‘There is no suitable explanation for this kind of taste.’

No matter how much he thought about the medicinal product and its preparation

process, Ian couldn't understand it at all. It seemed like something with a different taste had been mixed in. Amidst his endless thoughts, Ian finished drinking the vial and exited the mansion. It was still early morning.

"Tower lord."

Usually in these kinds of cases, they simply sent a letter or an underling. The head of Day Break, Crude, appeared in person this time. Was it because of the intensity of their first encounter? The fear was showing.

"It has been a while since I last saw you. Has it been that bad?"

"It wasn't that bad."

"What? Well... Ah, I heard that you took a vacation, for the purpose of training. Seems like you are tired from all that."

Ian's vacation was actually work for the Tower Lord. It couldn't exactly be considered confidential, as other wizards knew about it. Although it wasn't an information trade, Crude knew all of it.

"So to say, you might still be weak, but please look into the name of the castle. Even though it isn't favourable work and you're still in the middle of your training..."

Crude stood in an empty spot, gesturing to something with his hands while speaking. Ian understood the content without any difficulty. Maybe it was an elixir.

"It is an elixir."

"It's remarkable."

"The whole world knows that if it wasn't for elixirs, the mages wouldn't be able to survive."

Surely, that wasn't the reason for the elixir. In his past life, Ian had also received a lot of those. Crude often gave bribes in the form of little gifts like elixirs. Is this an elixir that can only be tasted once every few years?

"This is a precious little thing compared to a normal, commonly found elixir. Since it can only be made once every few years, it is still hard to obtain even with lots of money. I will give this to the Tower Lord who is training."

This was definitely the same.

Only the statement was a little different.
Ian had to receive that elixir.
To give it to his mother.

"I'll take it."
"Uh? Ah, yes, thank you very much!"

Without any hesitation or doubt Ian took it. Crude was a little flustered as Ian took it without even thanking him. He was especially perturbed since this was an obvious bribe and most people of high status, such as the Tower Lord, would show some kind of hesitation or pretend to be humble. Ian showed none of this.

'Is it because he is still young?'

With those thoughts, Crude handed some documents to Ian. It was the information that he had investigated until now. They were filled with very detailed stories, none of which were very useful.

"I'm very sorry for speaking like this, but I don't have the expenditure to pursue your request anymore. This is it."

Crude's voice tapered off.
He came close to Ian's ear.
There was no one around to overhear, but it was an instinctive action.

"If you review the documents, you will know, there were a few stories related to the Dragon. That said, they are a kind of a trend."

"Trend?"

"For example, it may be a story related to a dragon, but it holds status, while the other ones don't exist? The trend of collecting those kinds of things has been widespread among the nobles."

Things related to dragons is a trend?
Ian couldn't remember this from his past life.
Surely, this trend was far from anything.
Considering this, it was a strange story.

"It is unknown whether this is related to the requested order, as the nobles are sure to collect trendy items. For such a minor reason, there has to be something unbelievable

there, right?"

"Hmm..."

There must be a reason for this trend to appear amongst the nobles.

This was obviously something that was worth investigating.

"And the distribution of the goods is also quite secretive. These goods aren't found in the market anymore. They are being auctioned to the nobles."

Crude's speech grew longer.

Yet there wasn't any stuttering or faulty vocabulary in it.

"You see, only nobles can attend the auction, and on top of that, delivery of the dragon related items is strictly confidential. I think that, there is at least six major groups that have a share in the empire's trade."

Six major groups of the empire.

This was familiar to Ian.

No, to be precise.

'I know the top five groups.'

In the past life there had been 'five' major groups in the Empire. But a sixth major group? I have been involved in the upper level work related to the Ivory Tower. It wasn't possible for him not to remember it.

"Where are each of the six major groups?"

Unlike his previous life, the upper level were reborn as the major groups.

Ian curiously asked Crude.

"If I start with the easiest name first, The Jameson Top, Morton Top, Highway Top, Mario and brothers. This one is also the name of the groups. They were originally mercenaries."

"I know. Please continue."

'If he knew, why did he ask?'

Crude's lips went stiff.

'I would've yelled if he was a good man.'

No, I wouldn't have met with him in the first place.'

"Yes, Muratra Top and the last one is the... Boien group. Even the Tower Lord might know about them. This group is originally from the area North of the Tower Lord's hometown, Mogrian, and is quite active over there. For a few years now, they have been in the continental basin."

If it was the Boien group then Ian definitely knew them. Were these the people that he sold the mountain goblins' bodies to six years ago?

'Because I intervened, did the future change?'

It was definite that they didn't suddenly become a major group just because Ian sold them bodies of dead goblins. Ian just changed the flow of the stream. Even then, he still felt great pleasure.

"I wrote down the details in the documents. Please go through it once, if there is something that needs to be added then please contact me. Ah, there is no need for you to come all the way to our headquarters. You might have noticed it when you first contacted us, but all the commercial districts on route 1 are owned completely by us. I would be grateful if you contacted us through that side."

Ian's eyes were on Crude right until the end. It wasn't like this in his past life, his second impression of the empire's Tower Lord was the first intense impression in this one.

"Let's do it that way."

Once Crude left, Ian returned to the mansion.

When he entered the bedroom, he saw figures who hadn't been there before.

(This... a book with... their language.)

(Is that so? That human can read this.)

(Their language... is only...)

(Only those ones can read it.)

The Fairy Queen and the soul of the dragon Sparto were there. The Fairy Queen was flipping through a book that was larger than herself and showing it to the dragon.

"What are you guys doing?"

At Ian's question, they turned to the dragon. This was the conclusion that he could get over the last few months, to these people Dragon was a parent like being. It felt like a mother from one side and father from another. Ian never knew what it felt like to have a father. It was just a guess.

"Queen. I have something to ask."

(Ask away.)

"If so, is that from the Dragonian household?"

(What is up with you?)

"If you can't understand what it is, it means that you cannot write it."

If you do not understand it, you cannot write it.

There was a pretty disgusting expression.

Nevertheless, it was the Fairy Queen.

There was no way he could argue.

(What, I will. Anyone with the power will be able. The loyalty towards them will not disappear. Surely, only the Fairy clan kept their nest till the end.)

(I also... have their shield.)

(Noisy! Always talking about the bones that sleep.)

(The sleep... has its own reasons.)

At the intervention of the dragon Sparto the arguments became frequent. Ian reached a point, where just by thinking about it, he could block the noise, without having to rely on any magic.

'I can't get through this. No one can.'

Ian thought about the current issues. He should take measures to check the relationship between the dragonian who is likely to be the founder of the Order of the Dragon denomination, the trend that is circling among the nobles of the empire regarding the dragon, and the secret auctions that were being created by them.

'Everything can be pulled out in one shot.'

If you only look at the process, it is simple.

Try exhibiting some dragon related items.

The secret auction among the nobles.

It could be used as a lure.

‘It doesn’t matter if you don’t have a relationship.’

It is enough to recover the item again.

Ian had the power of funding.

He’ll only have to pay a small fee.

‘The secret auction will have security. How am I supposed to get invited as a buyer? I have to resolve these two... ’

Those two were the major problems. The issue was that the auction was run by the six major groups of the empire and in order to be invited as a buyer, he needed to be close with a noble.

‘Since I’m not a noble.’

Mages were also like nobles. If a command was sent from the Ivory Tower, the Lords would have to leap. Be that as it may, mages were still not nobles. As long as this was the case, it was going to be hard to enter into the secret auction of the nobles. Even more so if he couldn’t get acquainted with anyone. A mage who was a noble, is there such an existence?

‘I have to do this.’

Ian’s head was running at a high speed.

He started to go through his numerous memories.

The 42 years of his past life and the 6 years of his current life.

Ian extracted everything from there.



A few days after that.

The famous household, that has the ability to influence all the aristocrats of the empire, the ‘Parker’ family, hosted the secret auction at their estate. While hosting the auction, one can preview the items that are going to be exhibited, this was that kind of management. Auburn was also in the process of managing their quality.

“Duke Auburn, it’s an honor to meet you here like this.”

“AhAh, are you the one of the Boien group?”

"I'm Roberto. Please look after me."

Auburn Park and a large-bellied middle aged man shared their greetings. He introduced himself as the exhibitor and director of the Boien group. The impression he left wasn't a great one. Could it be said that he looked like a perfect example of a vicious trader? If based purely on appearance, then it was so.

"It depends on the quality of the thing."

"That's the thing. It's highly satisfying."

"Wow, a confident guy."

"Are you confident? I've been eating chopped rice and went all over looking for things. Through all of my experience, this was my first time seeing something like this."

Roberto started to praise it loudly.

Auburn was feeling suspicious of these praises.

It was rather counter productive.

It was like that until now.

"There wasn't a single person until now who would introduce an exhibit item with such praise. Everything here must be related to Dragonians, so don't talk like that again. Since the code of this auction house is Dragonian. You are aware about it right?"

"Is that what you mean?"

"Humm... lets see..."

Auburn Park folded his arms and glared at Robert. The merchant Robert knew it for sure and nodded his head. Will Robert show me the item?

"Please come over to this side."

Boien group's top, was definitely Roberto.

Roberto took out a locker from the carriage and placed in it front of Auburn, who gently opened it. Inside, was a huge book, that wasn't normal. Just by looking at the cover, you could tell it wasn't made by humans.

"The, the hell, this book..."

Looking at it, the image stayed in Parker's eyes.

Recovering from the shock of seeing the book, he asked.

“What, what is this? Where did you get this book?”

“Don’t be so surprised. This is exactly...”

The merchant Roberto stopped speaking for a moment and went closer to the ear of Auburn.

“An item related to the Dragon.”

Chapter 82

The Trap (2)

The merchant, Roberto, waited a moment before he spoke.
He leaned in close to Auburn's ear.

"This is something related to Dragon."

"Dra, Dragon household?"

"This is the most treasured object in our group. A book that came from the northern end of the Cold Wood nation, which is being reborn. One might know this to be precisely an article of quality, it does not need inspection, right? My mind also went blank the first time I saw this."

There was no other choice. It was a dragon household article that was gently spewing out unique magic. Nobles would know the spells of the Dragon and normal humans would feel the unusual aura it radiated.

Tak!

Roberto closed the lid of the locker. The dazed eyes of Auburn Parker regained its sanity. For a while, he had been inexpressibly fascinated and drawn towards it.

"This is indeed, for yourself. You can record the highest amount..."

"If that's so, it would be better. Will it be in the secret auction to be hosted by Duke Auburn? It is my desire that your high reputation will be more established with this thing of the Dragon household."

After the merchant finished his work, he looked at Auburn Parker and got to the point.

"If you don't mind, may I put up a request?"

"Request? What do you want?"

It was because he saw a great thing.
Or was it because of the flattery that he heard?
Auburn's voice became smooth.

“For this auction there is a recommended person who needs to be a participant. Please consider inviting them.”

“Hmm, if this wasn’t an auction that I was hosting, as you might know, it wouldn’t be possible for just anyone. You must have known that much.”

“It is someone who does not fall under the category of the nobles. They have a lot of interest in the Dragons and has often bought these kind of antiques from us.”

“Oh, there was someone like that who I didn’t know about?”

“It is possible. That person isn’t a noble.”

“... Are you kidding me right now?”

Why are those who aren’t nobles called?

A secret hobby of the nobles?

Auburn Parker’s voice raised.

“You’ve misunderstood.”

“What did I misunderstand? Nobility cannot be bought with money!”

“Those were the words you’ve spoken. It is a customer who wants to recommend a participant for the auction. He has inherited nobleness that cannot be compared with money; the blood of the Imperial family.”

At this statement, Auburn Parker fell silent for a moment. Someone with the blood of the Imperial Family? Someone from the Imperial family who has interest in dragons and their related things?

‘The fifth prince? No, there is no way for that.’

The fifth prince Ragnar already belonged to the ‘The Order of Dragon’, where Auburn was also a member. The missionary activities do not intervene with the ‘antique collecting trend’ at all. Even if they do, there is no reason for them to interfere in such a cumbersome manner, as it is a simple thing that can be accomplished by oneself or with the teachers.

“Is it definitely someone who has inherited the blood, that is the truth?”

“It’s the truth.”

The person who answered was not the merchant Roberto, as it sounded like a woman’s voice. An elegant and cheerful voice came from the wagon from which Roberto brought the Dragons’ item.

"It has been a while. Duke Auburn."

The voice belonged to the Imperial Princess.

The only younger sibling of the Prince.

It was 'Hailey Greenriver'.

"Princess, Miss princess? Miss, what..."

"A trend is something that women are supposed to lead. Aren't a lot of nobles already taking part in this?"

Immediately, Auburn Parker's head started to feel dizzy. The princess's appearance was lacking something that could not be seen. Firstly, what is a trend? It is culture that people follow. As the princess said, many noble women had also started to join the fad. At this point, no one knew.

'If it is a princess, then it is easy to fall into the fashion.'

A princess lacked a lot in many ways. Using marriage as a tool, the royal family was linked with the nobility, it was nothing more than an ideal setting. Also if one does not fulfill their obligation as a tool, one will be given less priority. There are quite a lot of princesses who are afflicted with powerlessness in history.

"There is nothing that could be done, except dressing up and buying luxuries."

Auburn turned his head casually. An emerging wave will start the trend and the crowded markets will turn towards this fad as the princess of the nation surpasses nobility. Furthermore, believing in the princess would lead to a chance for the religious order.

"You did. Even so Miss, I didn't know that you were interested in matters relating to the nobles. No, it seems like you already have the proficiency to follow the former members..."

"It isn't that extreme. Um, only a little?"

"Haha, little you say! Since you've come, go on with confidence. Everyone is a VIP and every seat has a prize, but I'll prepare a very special seat for the Miss."

"You would really do that?"

"That is what I said."

The secret auction hosted by Parker was held in a cottage a short distance outside of the Empire. Auburn Parker and Princess Hailey went into the cottage. Maybe there would be a few nobles inside.

“Wow.”

Once Roberto confirmed that the princess and Duke entered, the bellied Boien group member took a breath and turned away. He was like a vicious trader because of his fat body and the first impression, often misunderstood as lazy, but Roberto wasn't such a person. He was a merchant who had conscience, but his flesh was bloated because of a chronic illness, struggling to keep up with the body in the following years.

‘I know very well, Roberto.’

He had jumped onto a gambling board in his life.
This was a huge gamble that he needed to do.

‘If I succeed, I will be the first trading partner between the Ivory Tower, its related areas and the group. Ivory Tower, academy, communication centre, alchemy, magic engineering, and many more could be monopolized.’

The name of the Mogrian's Boien Group was greatly known, as they were on the top of the conduit and were quite large. This was a definite thing six years ago, and they were open to talk about expanding their business.

‘Homage will be paid to me gradually.’

Then an incident broke out inside the Group. It wasn't just a single case, it was overlapped with numerous betrayals that left them in a difficult spot. When this happened, Ian came to dispose the bodies of the goblins, and were able to process the profits to the urgent problems.

‘Yes, I know very well. As a merchant and as a human. If it wasn't for Mr. Ian we would be in ruins now.’

The profit for the goblins carcasses did not amount to much. It solved around five of the whites problems, however those five figures were the footsteps for the other problems.

‘The situation was the same, it was the same mentally.’

He just waited for the day he would be paid, and he finally got the chance. Now he felt like he was a young man. The sixth class mage Ian who even climbed up to the tower, came towards Roberto in person.

‘He was obviously a twelve year old kid and he is already in the Ivory Tower. It isn’t a crime.’

Ian Page’s request was a big one: to sell an item in the secret auction held for the nobles and to ask for the princess ‘Hailey Greenriver’ to be a participant in the auction house. Also, they would let him know the situation later, as in the business policies of the Ivory Tower they had promised to pay beforehand for the price that they decided to give.

‘There is no way they would go back on their words.’

Anyway, the opponent was going to provide the Ivory Tower. There was no need to question if they would change their words. In fact, it was the opposite as it was nearly impossible to reject it. To refuse the request of the Ivory Tower Lord? Not just any mage, but the Tower Lords direct request?

‘This was destined to happen eventually.’

From the moment they had met Ian Page six years ago, the merchant Roberto’s destiny was designed to flow like this. At least that was what he thought.

‘I am Roberto Boien.’

It seemed like it would be a long day.



How long has it been since then?

When the sky was dull, the long awaiting secret auction began.

“The second exhibit is from the Morton Group.”

Many nobles attended the auction that was being held by Auburn Parker. There were

a variety of people to be seen, from esteemed ladies to honorable people, the successors, the second Duke, and the third Duke. If they had a common point, it was that only one person from each family attended. In other words, it meant that they all came here to represent their family.

“The legendary dragon called the red dragon, whose leather and scales are like wine, this artist has put its figure into the painting! One of the works left by Albion Cosco, a genius painter of principality...”

The voice of the auctioneer rose through the voice amplification crystal and reverberated throughout the Parker’s cottage. Of course, the participants were nobles, so there was no way to beat the sound of an ordinary auctioneer.

‘The dragon item is for the last.’

Meanwhile, it wasn’t just the nobles who were in the cottage. Ian sat with them, hidden to the rest of the participants.

‘Invisibility.’

A spell that makes its castor transparent.

The spell that deceives everyone’s eyes.

‘If there is anything related to the Dragonian.’

Ian ‘really’ used the dragons’ item as bait. It was impossible to use a fake one. It wasn’t a book that the households possessed, also there was no way to obtain enough of the unique magic and aura that the dragon book had.

‘I’ll definitely ask.’

Whether it would gain more than the adequate amount of funds.

With coercive magic and force.

They will surely show a great obsession towards the Dragon’s item, Ian’s bait.

“This is the moment that you’ve been waiting for. The last item for today’s auction! Well, even for a noble’s child, this has been checked in advance by Duke Auburn Parker, and this is something that doesn’t need to be explained. So, let’s look at it already.”

The stage of the auction rose and the book surfaced. A large book that didn't seem to be like anything made by a human. There wasn't even a single movement as everyone looked at the book silently.

"An item that flew in from the Cold Wood Nations, Boien Group, it indeed is a wonderful exhibit. Its name is..."

The auctioneer purposely paused.
The curiosity of the participants arose.

"Dragon's Language."

Finally the Dragon's Language was up for auction. It was amazing to even look at. It matched the purpose of the antique collectors exactly. Though everyone was looking at it, it was quite overwhelming for them and the auctioneer unfolded the book to show its contents, which were even more perfect. It was filled with characters that no one knew, yet even then they didn't feel like random doodles.

"Fifty thousand gold."

For a moment, everyone was frozen still.
The first bidding had started.
It began with five thousand gold.

"Fif, fifty thousand is the opening bid."

It was staggering for a moment, as it was a huge amount of gold. Everyone's attention was directed towards the bidder. Even looking at that person was making their heart race. It was the Empire's princess Hailey Greenriver.

"Fifty thousand gold it seems..."
"This high from the beginning?"
"Also, it's from Miss princess..."

Many nobles were talking among themselves. It could be understood that the princess was involved in the secret hobby of the nobles. It was a reason similar to Auburn's judgment. But, investing that much money was unexpected.

"Fifty thousand gold! No more bidders?"

One didn't know that the gold wasn't the princess property and would eventually be returned to the original place.

On top of that, it was just starting now.

"Sixty thousand gold."

A new bidder came forward.

It was the organizer Auburn Parker.

"Duke Auburn is directly...?"

"Since he is the organizer, it is not impossible for him to participate..."

This nonsense couldn't last long.

No, the target hasn't taken that long.

"Hundred thousand gold."

The princess, Hailey Greenriver, who called for a hundred thousand gold.

It was an enormous amount.

It began to go beyond the level of luxury.

"..."

A little flustered, Auburn Parker looked at the princess. On top of that, it hadn't been estimated that one would bid a hundred thousand gold for it. Is the princess capable of investing in it?

'I don't know, is this some kind of joke?'

That could also be a possibility. The princess Hailey didn't know much about these auctions. If it was a character that was similar to the Prince of Orabiin, they'll have to survive with the playfulness.

'If bidding is done like this, I need get myself together.'

This was Auburn Parker's personal thought. But he couldn't proceed with that thought. Right then, in that moment he came back. Auburn Parker's brand new owner, the voice of the Holy Spirit.

(Be sure to get it. By any means! No matter how much it costs!)

From where did he hear the sound?

Auburn didn't understand that.

He just followed the instructions.

"Hundred and fifty thousand go..."

"Two hundred thousand gold."

Auburn hadn't even finished speaking and the princess already called for two hundred thousand gold.

The eyes of the audience fluttered at those words.

Some had their tongues stuck.

He confirmed that it was a joke.

"Two hundred and fifty thousand go..."

"Three hundred thousand gold."

Auburn didn't realize when the price soared so high and he stood up. And his voice rose out of excitement.

"Five hundred thousand! Five hundred thousand gold!"

The price of the dragon language book now exceeded that of a grand mansion. Even the princess had a sign of concern in her eyes. It was something that needed concern.

'Mr. Ian asked to me call up until exactly a million gold.'

The princess came all the way here because of Ian's request. Just like the target group Boien, she was also promised one thing from Ian, which was for him to immediately become her 'second mentor'.

'If I keep bidding until a million, the nobles will look at me strangely... it'll be fine if only Mr. Ian could make me his accomplice.'

Being a second mentor was a serious matter. Ian would be a criminal who teaches magic illegally. Indeed, Ian already noticed the truth of the princess, once she accepted.

‘If he could help me without me being involved, if they can all be safe...’

For the last time, the princess got herself together.

“One million gold.”

At that, everyone went silent.

For how long is this silence going to last?

“Two million... gold.”

Auburn Parker called it at two million gold.

This was an expression that no one could understand.

The princess couldn’t raise the price even if she wanted to to.

“... Two, two million gold. Is there anyone else? I’ll start the count now. Until five. Going once, twice!”

The count began.

“Thrice, Four!”

The last number.

“Fi, Five!”

At this, the auction for the Dragon’s Language book was closed at two million gold. It was awkward the entire time for the host, the nobles, and the winner Auburn Parker.

‘I asked.’

A whopping sum of two million gold.

The amount no one would ever invest in a hobby.

No matter how much the money rotated, it will.

He needed to postpone them.

‘It is not your will.’

Ian was definite.

Auburn Parker, the empire's noble.
There was obviously someone behind him.
The Dragon Language had an existence that coveted it.
Whether or not it was a dragon.

'Let's move.'

Chapter 83

The Trap (3)

“Holy shit. Two million gold!”

At night, all the auctions have ended. The nobles who have participated left. The host and the announcer also went away. Only the owner of the cottage Auburn Parker was there drinking his wine while muttering.

“This is nothing but a woman’s mischief...”

He was angry about what happened in the auction earlier. That princess, Hailey Greenriver, seemed like she was just messing around. Was she willing to invest a large sum of two million gold? Can she, a princess and just a woman, invest that much money when she is not even an Emperor, a Prince, or the next heir?

‘Whatever, I have received the Emperor’s favor!’

Auburn Parker took out a bottle of the most expensive wine. The new owner of the two million gold was going to look after him. The problem was the prestige he had. Most of the nobles who participated in the auction were not yet members of his religious order. The ones who can make a difference to the order, what do they plan on doing?

‘The princess was obviously playing around saying two million gold, is she capable of investing in antiques? Is she a crazy one collecting antiques? Ha, this is ridiculous!’

Auburn put down the wine bottle.
He was trifling, and couldn’t help it.
Because there was a new owner.

‘Why was she so obsessed with it?’

It surely is a great book.
It can be felt by just seeing.
The problem was the two million gold.

There was a chance to get it more easily.
Being calm about it is fine.

‘It was the first time to hear that voice.’

One new owner, the princess wasn’t calm about it. The eyes and wings and tail of a dragon, and voice filled with excitement, it was the first time. This book, does it really have the language of the dragons?

“Definitely, definitely this is mysterious...”

Auburn opened the dragons language with a blank face.
It was that moment. The voice could heard.

(Bring me that thing. To that place.)

Auburn was surprised for a moment there and turned around. There was no one there. Except for the guard who were at the far off door for protection. From where did it come? Even his son who is a mage, Pavon Parker also can’t do magic like this.

‘The tower lord, a wizard better than that kid.’

Once he got to that point, it got comfortable. Until a while before all the worries that have plagued Auburn Parker disappeared like snow. This was the first reason why he pledged his allegiance to the ‘Order of the Dragon’, he was given power from the holy spirit.

‘To protect me and my family.’

From 6 years ago Auburn Parker was living in insecurity. Ledio ran away because of his son’s joke. Parker later received news that the alchemist came back with Ian Page and that he was being taken care of like family. From that moment it felt like Parker was being passed over. He saw Ledio when Parker went to the senior mages’s residence to give a bribe, there wasn’t even a response.

‘I didn’t have a clue about it until now, how long is this pressure going to be built. It must be. The tower lord had a great deal of power... ’

I lived in anxiety up until a few years ago when I met the Order of the Dragon through

Dumphil Morit. From then on, I became the member of the Order. And received the position of a preacher in charge inside the capital of the Empire.

‘The emperor, dragon, and state religion; Nothing else really matters. My family and I, if I can protect all of them, I will enjoy this continuously!’

Once again Auburn Parker became mindful, as he took the Dragon’s Language with him and left the cottage. There was a secret passage that goes through the woods a few blocks away from the cottage. As it would be dangerous if the soldiers followed, he immediately went down the secret passage.

‘A passage like this from the cottage.’

Surely I’m different from Auburn who had been around for a while. After a little distance from Auburn, Ian took a step back and switched off the Invisibility spell. It was dangerous to keep using too much mana.

‘I don’t know what kind of person is waiting for me.’

Instead, I lowered the Invisibility spell.

I kept some auxiliary spells prepped.

This much is enough.

Sabak sabak...

A sound that someone stepped on the grass.

That was the sound of Auburn Parker’s steps.

Deep into the woods, very deep.

How far deep did I come?

There was an empty spot with a huge rock.

In front of that rock Auburn Parker stopped.

“I’ll put it here.”

Auburn Parker spoke that in a small voice like mumbling and put down the book of Dragon’s Language. He didn’t forget to lay down a sheet. It wasn’t covered with dust, and there was nothing special to be done.

“Oh? Ah... I get it. Then, I’ll get going first. If you have anything that you need, feel free

to ask me at any time. Thank you for all. Yeah.”

I heard someone order it. Just like going out. Ian surely had interest in Auburn Parker and company. He concentrated on strengthening his five senses. Now with the Dragon’s Language book out in front, Ian was aware of the other presences.

‘Is it Dragonian?’

If so, it would be nice.

No, it should be that.

Sabak!

The spell that sharpened his five senses had just finished at this time.

Someone came in front of the stone.

It had a shape that was similar to a human.

From the head to the body and from the hands to the legs.

If one difference can be seen, there were two.

Ghoul like wings sprouted from the back.

Above the waist was a loose tail.

‘This matches to what the Fairy Queen has said.’

That guy was exactly how he was described.

The wings and tail of a dragon, as well as the eyes.

Well, the existence of the Dragonian.

‘I should ask them properly.’

Although the bait plan was only half way finished.

This was easier than the plan.

‘First time to overthrow.’

The goal is to suppress, toward that end the ‘magic of the household’ can be used. Isn’t this too complex? The range of play is narrow. The Fairy Queen is close with the Dragon, and I was going to use it in a non-hostile manner, yet I need to be ready to oppose the enemy.

‘At least I should let go of its movements.’

At first, I thought about trying from a conversation.
Seeing a dragon do magic isn’t an easy thing?
This is like what fairy queens said.
The conclusion was to hold.

‘I don’t know if it’s a friendly or not.’

Because of the Fairy Queen there was definite information and experience. One, it wasn’t Dragonian. There was no one sided existence, even when mixed with the society of the humans. But would he show me the spells of magic verbally? That dragon’s mana began to take off. In front of me was an unprotected potential enemy.

‘That could be a dangerous thing.’

Not just slightly dangerous, but a very dangerous thing.
Ian was ready to get into the action.
While, the spirit of the man was focusing on the book.
This was the perfect opportunity.

‘Frozen Shackles.’

Ian called out and the cold air formed a round chain, which caught the ankles of the Dragonian.

‘Caught it.’

A ring went up and caught the ankles of the Dragonian, while everything near the frost were swallowed. Surely, the target is the Dragonian’s ankle.

Kadak! Kadak! Kadak!

The lower half of the Dragonian’s body froze quickly.
Soon the upper body also began to freeze.

‘Now!’

Ian flew towards the Dragonian and at the same time, he chanted the order of the

household. The order should be completed as he was getting close to him. It was a ransom pleasure.

“...?”

The first plan of Ian seemed to be a failure. The frozen body of that guy started to blur, as if it was going to disappear.

‘Breakout?’

Ian also could do the breakout that was similar to this. The 6th Class level magic, the ‘Puppet Play’. So it was easy to be done. The words of the Fairy Queen were indeed correct. About this Dragonian.

‘Someone equivalent to me.’

More of a wizard.
And the thoughts reached there.

Kwang~!

The guy’s breakout explosion was huge.
It wasn’t a simple explosion.
The explosion was from the mass concentration of the mana.
If it wasn’t for a quick barrier, I would’ve been dead.

(Quite a thing. The barrier in that moment.)

At the same time a voice was heard.
Like the system of the households.
Not through the ears, but being heard in the mind.
The identity of this guy is definite.

‘Dragonian.’

Ian immediately gathered his mana.
It was an obvious explosion of hostility.
It was inevitable to fight.
But, it is a little weird.

(Are you a human? Not a level for a human?)
(Ah! You are that guy? That Ian... what?)
(Ian Page, the man who is cared by the old man.)

The voice came.
No, heard a voice.
It wasn't from a single person.

'One woman and two men.'

A total of three voices could be heard.
Ian was listening to them.
Was it all Dragonian?

'I guess he isn't one person.'

Suddenly the details that the Fairy Queen gave came into the mind. The story about Dragonian having eight different personalities. Also, as to which number I'm supposed to stop talking.

(Human Mage. You have been snooping around the auction house since before, I was aware of it. I don't know what this is about, I think it was used as a bait for some reason...)

Yet, from the sky three Dragonians appeared. All three of them with red wings and tail were dragons. Red dragons, they all seemed to have been born from the seeds of a dragon.

(Oh my, the trap isn't yours. This is the trap we laid out.)

The Dragonian is more thorough than I thought. He knew every movement of mine from the auction house, yet he didn't react. Instead he called out his clan. Equivalent to the 6th class mage, it wasn't just a saying, but it was the definite thing.

(Seems like there is something about this thing that you wish to know... What is it? That you want to know, the quality work. There is no need to hide, it'll be nice if you just say it.)

The Dragonian was speaking from earlier. Speaking with a profound voice, and his eyes were scanning Ian. Like the way one looks at their prey.

(I would have noticed if you were a mage like me. You should've already run. Even being alive would've been tough. That's how it would've been. In another case you could make it alive. It would be a shame to die. Many possible ways.)

The words of Dragonian weren't wrong. All three of them were similar to that of Ian, he wasn't the mage to look at these things? No matter how, Ian didn't find a way. Blowing them out with Hematocrit, was a way to escape from their pursuit.

"Yeah, won't do."

But Ian wasn't flustered.
Rather he had a relaxed face.
Yes, there wasn't for now.
That method means.
But, how far.

'Hematocrit.'

Something was coming out from Ian's hands.
A small pocket, 'a space bag'.

"So, three came to catch me?"
(You human, are you the mage who can go beyond his limit? I'm also burdened with it, but being thorough isn't a bad thing. If you want to blame, blame it on yourself for coming out here alone.)

"I came alone. No way."
(... what?)

At Ian's words, one of the dragonians did an extensive detection. It was to make sure that no one was hiding. There wasn't a single one around. He knew.

(Are you bluffing about it?)

Said the dragonian with a ridiculing voice.

“It isn’t a bluff.”

A word from Ian spit out.

That one word came out along with the cord to tie the bag.

A cord to close the snout of the space bag.

“Even you guys.”

That wasn’t the end.

Ian’s right hand went into the bag.

Soon, he pulled out a white piece.

“The tide.”

It was the fragmented sculpture from the ‘Dragon’s bone’.

All those fragments of bone were everywhere.

One handful, one handful, one more handful.

The mana was being taken into the ground.

From then, how many seconds have passed?

Gkukukukuku...!

There came a strong vibration.

Much stronger than what was anticipated.

It could be believed as an earthquake.

“Friends, face it.”

The result of the vibration was even more shocking. The dirt from the floor where the bones were planted, from all those places gear started to come out. Along with the huge and large ‘Spartoi’, the ‘empty shells’ of the dragon were equal to the number of the bones.

“See it.”

Chapter 84

The Trap (4)

(Spartoi?)

One of the three dragonians with a middle aged man's voice, appearing to be the eldest and the leader murmured, looking stunned.

Wasn't this the very first encounter with a family of different race in many hundreds of years? Especially, as Spartoi has been asleep for all this time, they could not see him for even much longer than other family members.

(You, why?)

(Evantus... It has been... A long time.)

Spartoi, the undead soldier of the dragon, has developed complicated feelings upon seeing 'Evantus', the dragonian. However, it was also difficult to avoid the power of the family. There was no other way, but to obey the commands of Ian Page, the human with that power.

(Forgive me... For my... Lack of courtesy.)

Centering Spartoi, many troops of the undead soldiers positioned them around Ian. It was a shielding posture. They have begun to use that power, the shield of the dragon. That is, to protect Ian Page, the human sorcerer.

(Spartoi! What is the meaning of this?)

'Evantus', the leader of the dragonians ground his teeth. Why is Spartoi assisting the low life human sorcerer? It wasn't comprehensible.

'No, that's fine. No need to be concerned.'

But soon, Evantus has found his composure. They were only just the undead soldiers of the dragon. They may work as a shield, but they are a slow moving bunch. Flying is out of the question for them. Although they possess strong javelin skills, they were also limited. On the contrary, the dragonians have the power of free flying. They also move very quickly. The thought was that should they decide to escape, they would be safe.

(You, human sorcerer. Although we do not know what you've done, we will retreat this time. We shall meet again soon. You are the master of the Ivory Tower, and there will

be no way for you to escape.)

Evantus was intimidating Ian.

He roared as if to threaten.

However, Ian's continence did not change.

He was casual, and even showed relaxed composure.

"Says who?"

(You have too much faith in the dragon's undead soldiers. But even they have limits...)

Evantus' voice was cut off momentarily. A presence was detected. Not down below, but in the air, at the similar height as where they were. Further, it was felt from all directions. It implied that there were more than just one or two.

(They are...)

The entities that were surrounding the three retreating dragonians all had small bodies, white hair and wings. Some of them even had light pink hair and wings as well.

(The Fairy... Clan?)

The fairy clan, following the footsteps of the dragon's undead soldiers? Where the hell are these families, which were in deep hibernation, coming out from?

(Even the queen...?)

Evantus recognized the fairy queen from among all the countless members of the fairy clan. His continence quickly changed darker. The situation couldn't be assessed properly by the sudden unfolding of events.

(It's been a while, Evantus.)

(Queen, you are also aiding that human?)

(The situation called for it.)

(How? Why?)

(It's too complicated for words. You need to experience it.)

It was very frustrating as far as Evantus, the dragonian, was concerned. Not only was

the unfolding situation incomprehensible, but the undead soldiers of the dragon and the fairy queen were all talking gibberish. What the heck is not courteous, what the heck is complicated and what the heck needs to be experienced to know?

(I just decided to think like that bastard, boney Spartoi. It must all be their will. If not, wouldn't it be too much? Don't you think?)

(What, what are you talking...)

(You will know soon enough. Even you.)

All of a sudden, the battle has turned. In the air, the fairy queen and her clan. Down below, the undead soldiers of the dragon and Ian Page. It was truly a situation where the enemy has taken over all of the sky and the ground.

(What, what the heck is going on? Father?)

A dragonian with the physique and voice that of a woman asked Evantus. Based on calling Evantus, father, it must be the daughter.

(...)

Evantus was lost for words for that question. There was nothing that could be said. The sudden appearance of the undead soldiers of the dragon and the fairy queen, even worse, they weren't even allies. Everyone seemed to be helping that human sorcerer, Ian Page.

'What has happened...?'

Evantus was perplexed.

Has it been imagined?

A situation such as this.

'Having them accompany turned out to be self-defeating.'

The sorcery level of Evantus was more than sufficient to execute 'teleport', the instantaneous transport spell. If he was by himself, there would be sufficient time to escape.

The problem was with the other dragonians as their magical powers were far lagging behind that of Evantus.

(Fa, father...)

The two other dragonians understood it without much difficulty. The tide has turned, and that they have become burdens on their father.

(Human, what is it that you want? Seeing that you are benefitting from the assistance of the dragon's undead soldiers and the fairy queen, there must be something specific that you want, in locating me. More specifically, the existence of us, the dragonians...)

Evantus, the dragonian has decided.

To negotiate if it was possible.

No more retreat. No way to win either.

The undead soldiers of the dragon and the fairy clan.

Along with the 6th class human sorcerer.

How could they be overcome?

(If possible, I'll grant you what you want. Tell me, what you want.)

First, he needed to hear what Ian Page, the human that was the beneficiary of the protection of the families, wanted. That would be the only way to at least guess what his purpose and the situations with the families were.

"Should we have a talk, first?"

Ian spoke with due courtesy.

The voice came over in less hostile way.

"There is a lot to talk about."

Evantus hesitated for a moment by that proposal.

As if to have decided, he came down to the ground.

The other two dragonians joined him.

“Please, all three of you, this way.”

Finally, the distance between Ian and the dragonians has closed. The wings and the tails were more noticeable at that distance. As far as only his face was concerned, it was fairly a handsome one, while the amphibian looking eyes were the only shortcomings. Of course to them, it was a thing of the pride as proof of the dragon heritage.

“The thing that I wanted to ask of you...”

Ian slightly blurred the tail end of his words.

He had other objective.

It would be possible at this time.

It has approached so close already.

There wasn't any resistance either.

It was the perfect condition.

‘That is, to initiate the power of the family.’

Was Ian's intention been noticed? Both the fairy queen and the dragon's undead soldiers shook their heads widely. As if to feel sorry for Evantus, the dragonian, a comrade of the family, who will soon be in the same boat as they were.

(What is it? Speak.)

“That is...”

Ian initiated the spell of the family.

At the same time, a golden light mana appeared choppily.
It was a very strong golden light.

“I beg for your considerations going forward.”

(What...?)

The golden light mana encapsulated Evantus.

It was the same as what had happened to Espel, the fairy queen.

It was the same as what had happened to Spartoi, the undead soldier of the dragon.

Evantus was also speechless for a while.

He just stared with confused eyes.

At Ian, the fairy queen, and Spartoi.

And upon the palms of his both hands,

(What, what is this...)

If one was a family, one could immediately sense it.

The power that can only be felt from them, the dragons.

The power of magic that cannot be rejected was being felt.

From Ian Page, the human sorcerer.

(Them? No, it cannot be.)

The dragonian appeared to be especially intense.

The power of the family that it was feeling, that is.

It seemed even more so as opposed to Spartoi and the fairy queen.

Was it because the emotion that he had was different than from those of any other?

The entity of dragons was like their parents.

“Hm...?”

Ian gave sufficient time to the dragons for them to understand the situation, but puzzled look came to Ian's eyes. Evantus had the power of the family for sure. Because of that, isn't he in such a confused state? However, the other two dragonians did not show any such appearance.

“You two do not have any issues?”

The dragonians shrunk as Ian asked. That was the bull's eye. That is, Ian's question itself. They couldn't feel anything, let alone the power of the family. They were in state of confusion based on Evantus' reaction.

(... They are my children, not their family members. When my children were born, they had already disappeared. They haven't even seen them, so how can they be their family members?)

Evantus murmured quietly. That's right. With the exception of Evantus, the other two dragonians were Evantus' children, rather than the dragons' children. It could have been expressed as a kind of 3 generations.

(I suppose, that would be right. Our clan's children are also in similar situations. I am the only family member of theirs while the clan's children are the family members that would obey my words as the queen. It should be similar.)

The fairy queen added as she nodded while listening to Evantus' explanation. To put it in simpler terms, it is just 'family's family'. As it is like between the fairy queen and the fairies, so is between Evantus and the remaining dragonians.

“Hmmm.”

It is the half-dragon, over which the power of the dragons has no influence.

Ian was feeling helpless.

Was it an unknown entity?

But soon, he organized his thoughts.

A plan came to his head.

“If you are a descendant then you are probably.”

(It's Evantus.)

“Is Evantus your father then?”

(That's right.)

“It must be the same situation as the humans? That is even for the dragons, corruption, for instance...”

(Similar situation as the humans? Are you equating our race to the human's that cheat and kill each other for money and power? It is insulting.)

“Then I am relieved.”

Ian replied calmly even at Evantus' sarcastic remarks. In fact, that sarcastic remark was what Ian most wanted to hear.

“Then, from now on.”

Ian spoke as he looked once at Evantus and the two dragonians.

“I command with the power of the family.”

Evantus focused at the words, power of the family. It had no relevance to his will. The expression, irresistible, came to his mind. It was the same for the fairy queen and the dragon's undead soldier that were listening as well.

“For the two dragonians, to which the power of the family is not influential, I recommend that you do not devise any schemes going forward. If any scheme is to be put into motion, I command Evantus, himself, to dispose the culprits and commit suicide.”

(What... What?)

If the children are to devise schemes, then their father will kill them and kill himself.

It wasn't just a shocking order, but rather a cruel one. It must be followed, in the end. As far as the power of the family is in effect, the command is absolute.

(Such, such unbelievable...!)

"If I or my allies were to be harmed, killed or fall in hardships by your children's schemes, for that also, I will command you, Evantus, to kill your children and commit suicide as well."

(...!)

There wasn't any hesitation in Ian's command.

The subsequent commands were also the same.

The dragonians, over which the power of the family has no affect.

The command that will emasculate the two was given next.

"At last, I command you the queen and Spartoi. If the children of Evantus were to put in motion any scheme, you two family members are to track and annihilate the dragonians as long as you live."

When Ian's order has reached that point.

No one was able to speak.

Evantus, the red dragonian, included.

Also, the son and the daughter of Evantus.

And even the fairy queen and Spartoi, as well.

However, everyone had a common thought.

'... Vicious human.'

Has he read the families' minds?

Ian showed a small smile.

Of course, no one smiled along with him.

“I think things are in order, more or less... Let’s start the main discussion. There are many things that I’d like to ask and hear from you, the dragonians, but for now.”

There were thousand things that he wanted to find out.

First was whether it was the order of the dragons.

What the objective was.

What their plan was.

What the size of the order is.

What the difference was from the previous life.

‘Also, whether the influence could be grabbed.’

However, mostly.

‘The Elixir must be made whole as well.’

Much work needed to be done.

Chapter 85

Five Breaths Of The Red Dragon (1)

“My Lady. Where have you been?”

“Well, I just needed to take care of something.”

It was the princess Hailey, who has returned to the palace.

The servant girls designated to the princess asked.

“We were worried because you were so late!”

“Not worried, but surprised?”

“As far as worrying was concerned... a little?”

There were times in the past, at which time the princess went out to see the city without the palace people knowing, but it was the first time that the princess has returned so late. Of course, no one was worried. The servant girls that were close to the princess are like good old friends, and they also knew that the princess was a sorcerer as well.

“Sena, Aria, Catherine.”

“Yes?”

The servant girls appeared surprised by the sudden calling out of their names. The princess had often called them by their names, but there seemed to be an extra weight in her tone of the voice, this time around.

“Sorry.”

“What, about what, my lady?”

“About everything.”

It was accompanied by an apology out of the blue moon.

Has something really happened?

There were looks of concern in the eyes of the servant girls.

“I mean, there is no need to look at me that way. I just wanted to apologize to you all. You always got swept up into things because of me? And be worried about the watchful eyes of the Ivory Tower.”

The princess has never been comfortable even for a day since she had made a childish decision to hide the fact that she was a sorcerer. It wasn't because of for her own safety that she was concerned about. Rather, it was for the safeties of her close acquaintances like the servant girls that are with her, right now. Her act of obliging to Ian's request today was also for the same reason.

“I'm sorry. To you all. Sincerely.”

She had been so surprised by Ian's sudden visit, a short time ago. On top of that, he even asked her for help. It was the same Ian, who coldheartedly told her that the palace does not need a princess, and gave her a liberating advice by telling her to live by doing what she wants to do. It was that Ian, who was asking for help. From her perspective, it was a trade. Responding to a favor, being asked, was also a condition of obliging act in the future. It wasn't very difficult to do, either.

‘She had thought about making the request, again...’

Since an opportunity came, she thought about making a request. To forgive the trespasses of those countless number of people that helped hiding the fact that she was a sorcerer.

But, she had changed her mind. She was cautious to approach Ian as he had shown resolve and unshakable conviction during the audit of black magic. So instead, she had asked him to become her teacher.

‘It will be safer to make him a co-conspirator.’

Ian would become a teacher and teach sorcery illegally, hence becoming a co-conspirator. That was the decision the princess had made as a safety net. She also wanted to learn magic from Ian at the same time.

A desire to become a stronger sorcerer, then to rise to the more powerful position, has sprung up. Of course, it wasn't just for the fame and honor for herself.

‘For the things that I’ve done.’

After the day that she had received Ian’s advice, Hailey had even lost sleep over the thoughts of what to do. Should I really go out to the world? Or forget everything and live happily as a princess? No, what she had to do was already been decided.

‘I must be accountable. No matter what.’

Even if Ian was to turn a blind eye, will she be able to hide it throughout all her life? The chances of being discovered were always there. Was that all? At the moment of being discovered, it wouldn’t be her that would be harmed. All those that had helped her keep the secret would be the target of being harmed.

‘But, if I was to rise to the high level sorcerer. What if I was to rise beyond that level by some chance...’

Wouldn’t it be possible by my own accord? To make those that have obliged to the petulant princess’ request, innocent of the only committed sin for being unable to reject a request from a member of the royal family.

‘All that is needed was to achieve one more level. Only one more level.’

That was the reason for opting to become Ian’s apprentice.

That was the reason for continuing the life of a sorcerer.

It was the decision made to be accountable.

For those innocent people that had helped her.

“What, what are you sorry for, my lady?”

“... Huh?”

The servant girls responded as they heard the apology.

The expressions were saying it was no big deal at all.

“On the contrary, because everyone kept the shared secret, you’ve been very kind to us? You may not realize, but we’ve been very laid back. Also referred to as the princess’ faction, yes, us.”

“Fac, faction?”

The princess’ faction, no way.

It was the first time that Hailey has heard of it.

Especially, when she has never established a faction.

“Well, you probably didn’t know? Although we may look just...”

“We are the real power behind the princess’ palace.”

“The head servant girl cannot disregard us.”

In response to the lively responses from the three servant girls.

“Real, real power...”

The uninformed princess murmured. In some way, the girls were being rewarded with a kind of compensation for the burden of keep the secret. Although it is not comparable to the weight of the burden, Hailey Greenriver was appreciative, just by them showing such lively expressions.

“By the way, my lady. Please take a look at this.”

Catherine, one of the servant girls, brought out an exquisite looking chest.

Even from a quick look, it was covered with colorful ornaments and patterns.

Click!

The inside was even more spectacular.

Multitudes of jewelry and treasures were lined up.

“This is a gift from the head of the Malone Family.”

“Malone Family? Gift?”

“He is the one with where the talk of the marriage was discussed, this time around.”

“Ah...”

One of the real powers of the imperial city. It was Adam Malone, a handsome lad and the head of the ‘Malone Family’. He was also the royal that was strongly linked to the marriage discussions with Hailey.

“Isn’t this pretty? The lord has some good taste.”

“Well, it is probably the choice made by one of their princesses or a servant girl.”

“Ah, is that so? Well, still it is pree-ee-tty.”

As the servant girls were adding their opinions one by one.

“I, I don’t like it that much.”

Hailey said as she closed the chest shut.

At least, she didn’t want to even talk or think about a marriage.

‘There is still much to do.’

True, she had a lot of work to do.

But then that reasoning didn’t seem to be everything.

That is, the reason for feeling uncomfortable with talking about marriage.

‘Why does it keep popping into my head?’

Ian Page, the young tower lord of the Ivory Tower. His rough face and voice came to her thoughts. He is only a tool to protect the people around, not even that handsome compared to the head of the Malone Family, and even 2 years younger than her. But then, why?

‘What, what am I thinking.’

Hailey shook her head wildly.

Almost to the point of feeling dizzy.



The reason was simple for Ian to have chosen the princess as a participant in the auction.

It was because she was known to be a high ‘princess’ without anything to do. Wouldn’t she be the perfect cover for being able to infiltrate the life styles of the nobles, without any invitation, and not raising any suspicion?

‘There were weaknesses too.’

On top of that, Ian even had a weakness on her, making her the perfect front for his

purpose. Moreover, she was also a 3rd class sorcerer. She should be able to protect herself should there be any trouble.

‘I thought there would be a follow up request.’

If there was one exception, it was the princess’ request. He had expected her to ask for a favor that she had mentioned during the audit for black magic. That she will confess to it, just so that the people around her would be made innocent. However, that wasn’t it. She asked to be accepted as an apprentice. Of course, the underlining scheme was obvious though.

‘Still.’

It was more agreeable, and unexpected.

The princess’ actions were much better thought out than expected.

He felt her willingness to admit her mistakes, and even sought to be accountable. It was a demonstration of proactive behavior, unlike that of a bird that had died in a cage in previous life.

(What is it that she wants to do with me?)

It was then.

A voice was heard that cut off Ian’s thoughts.

It was Evantus, the red dragonian.

He has been waiting for a while.

The ‘main topic’ that Ian was supposed to speak of.

“Ah, I am sorry. I was just thinking.”

Ian organized his thoughts, conveying his apology first.

He placed the thoughts on the princess in the back burner.

Instead, he brought out the things that he had to take care of.

“First, there are some questions that I’d like to ask of. The order of the dragons.”

First, all about the order of the dragons.

“Is it true that the order was established by you sir, Evantus?”

(That’s right.)

Auburn Parker is a highly impactful aristocrat among the nobles of the imperial city. I assume the size of the order would be significant, being able to wield such a noble person as a subservient. Is that right?”

(That also is right)

The responses of Evantus, the dragonian, were brief. Although the replies were influenced by the power of the family, uncooperative attitude has persisted. Unlike the resigned Fairy Queen, and admissive Spartoi, he did not seem resigning or admissive.

‘How can mere human be the basis of their power?’

For the fairy queen, it was being resigning.

For Spartoi, it was being admissive.

And the dragonian is being unaccepting.

Their individual characteristics were visible.

Well, let them be.

Ian didn’t pay much attention.

Dragonian replies half heartedly?

All I need to do is just ask specific, detailed questions.

“Very well. I will save my questions regarding the specific organization and size of the order for later, and will ask other questions. What is the specific, ultimate purpose? The end goal of the order, I mean.”

(It is to find them.)

“Specifically.”

(... The 90 percent of the world is claimed by you, humans, isn’t it? We just wanted to use you since your existence is everywhere. To find the traces leading to their whereabouts, that is.)

“That may be the objective of the dragonians, but it wouldn’t be for the nobles like Auburn Parker?”

(Of course, we have sown a number of delusions within the ruling class.)

“Delusions?”

(Like a puppet emperor that can be manipulated on a dime, a national religion and absolute protection, using the powerful tools and sorcery that I have. I’ve guaranteed the aspects that they desired.)

In simple terms, to be the ‘true power’.

The greed of the nobles has been stimulated.

Ian had certainly anticipated it.

As a result, it was all the more hard to figure out.

The order with this much size.

The order with a crystal clear objective.

Why did they in previous life?

‘Nothing distinguishable was achieved?’

It is time to find out the truth.

But he couldn’t ask outright.

The only way was to compare the differences between present times against the past life.

“When did you first start the order?”

(It has been since many tens of life times over for you, but it has not been very long since operating by stimulating the petty greed of your human kind.)

“Any reason for having started the operation in earnest?”

(A purpose was found.)

“Purpose?”

(My children.)

Evantus, the dragonian, looked upon his children.

(My children must be granted the time from them. That's the only way to enjoy the lifespan that they were born with. I've received it long time ago, but my children weren't able to.)

It was said that the descendants of Evantus were born after the disappearance of the dragons. It was probably impossible to receive the 'permission of time' even if they wanted to.

(We, the dragonians, are their bloodline, however at the same time, we are also illegitimate. It was the indication that we are the mixed offspring with a low race. If they did not want us, we are to be erased at any time. That is who my race, descendants and I are.)

Evantus' response has become lengthy.

It was different from up to this point.

There was even an aura of tremendous grief.

(My children, not much is remaining.)

The statement that not much is remaining.

It probably refers to lifespan.

The lifespan of two descendants.

"Exactly, how long do they have?"

(Most likely, under one hundred years.)

"..."

A short remaining life time is one hundred years.

It wasn't something that Ian could never sympathize with.

(Only less than one hundred years remain...)

(That is... Truly... A problem...)

The responses of the fairy queen and Spartoi were different.

They were filled with empathy.

‘Unbelievable.’

For some, living two life times won’t even come to one hundred years. Ian felt both joy and grief for belonging to a race with short lifespan.

(I must find them, just for the reasons for my children to receive the time. The order is a tool to find them, no more, no less.)

When he heard that far.

Ian could assume.

The reason for the order to have remained under ground.

“What if you were to find the dragon and achieve your goal, that is, if your children’s time gets extended by being granted the permission of time?”

He also wanted to verify.

Through Evantus’ reply.

“What will happen to the order?”

(It is of no concern to me.)

It was a very clear and irresponsible reply.

But that was out of true sincerity.

And it appeared to be the truth.

‘The dragonian in the previous life has achieved his purpose.’

Then everything becomes natural. The order of the dragon would be disregarded, and the order would naturally collapse as its focus has disappeared. It was the most likely assumption at this point.

“Hmm.”

The situation has been understood somewhat.

Also what the identity of the order of the dragon was.

And even the purpose and what its future would hold.

What remains now was disposal of.

“The order.”

Ian spoke after finishing his thoughts.

The counterpart was Evantus, the dragonian.

“Continue growing.”

(... Continue?)

Evantus asked as if it was unexpected. Isn't Ian Page, the human sorcerer, known as the hero as the tower lord of the Ivory Tower of the Greenriver Empire? He thought he had wanted the order to break up, or that he would dismantle it himself. It was because they were an irreverent power from the empire's perspective. Why then advise it to continue to grow?

“That's right. Continue.”

(Not disperse, but grow it?)

“Yes. Also continue the work to find the dragon as well.”

Ian's calculation was quick.

Ultimately, Evantus is the owner.

He is the entity to where the power of the family will reach.

What does this imply?

‘In fact, he is now like being in the palm of my hand.’

The order of the dragon, the power it wields is much greater than thought. The order is what will come into the palm of Ian's hand. Why would he disperse such power that can be so useful?

‘The royal family, Ivory Tower, aristocrats of the imperial city.’

The three points of power that make up the capitol.

That's what he would be able to control.

The crowned price as the pivot for the royal family.

For the Ivory Tower, by using the powers as the tower lord.

The order of the dragons for the aristocrats of the imperial city.

‘Every useless diversions and schemes would be contained.’

At least, Greenriverdium, the capitol can be made completely a safe area. The most perfect, safe area for Ian and his family, that is.

“And next.”

He had ended the conversation on the subject of the order. There will be more questions going forward, but he had decided to move on. There was still the real purpose.

(Do you have more things to discuss?)

“Not really a discussion.”

Ian took out a small bottle of herbs from a pocket. The bottle was encapsulated with multiple layers of shield magic that it was harder than many types of stones.

“This is it. The reason for searching for you, Evantus.”

(What is that?)

“This is Elixir.”

(Elixir?)

“It hasn’t been made whole yet.”

Ian set the bottle down on the forest ground.

Then he continued.

“By any chance, is breath a possibility?”

(It is one of the powers that were given to me.)

“I wish you would use the breath on this bottle.”

(... The breath?)

Evantus looked back and forth at the bottle and Ian. Then he chanted as if something

had come to his mind.

(This is...)

“Do you know something?”

In fact, Ian had expected it somewhat. Think about it. Elixir requires the breath of the dragonian. How can he not know the identity of the Elixir.

(... I do not know well either. However, I recall them, making such requests at times. They asked to heat up by breathing to the bowl, containing some liquid. The reason was that the liquid could not sustain the breath of the dragons.)

Does it mean that it is the Elixir that even the dragons have drunk?

Ian's heart pounded little by little.

It is not likely to be an ordinary Elixir.

“Please do exactly the same as you had done before. I'll help you if this can be made whole as requested.”

(Help with what?)

“Finding the dragon.”

(... Are you sincere?)

“Yes, I am.”

Ian's voice and his sparkling eyes weren't shaking. Although it was an untrustworthy human, based on the power of the family, refusal was also impossible.

(I see. I will trust you, for now.)

At the same time, dark, crimson sparks of fire came out of Evantus' throat, from deep down. The breath did not cause fire on the surface or on the weeds that were around the target. It only heated up the bottle that contained Elixir.

The spark itself will move according to the will of Evantus, so if he ordered it to not cause fire, then it will not. If it was ordered to never die out, it will not. That is what the 'dragon's breath' was all about.

(This should be sufficiently heated, by now.)

Evantus halted the sparks as he had remembered in the past, and his feeling was accurate. The bottle that had pink liquid now showed red flaming color. Not the outside surface, but from within the liquid itself.

‘The five breaths of the dragon.’

Ian picked up the Elixir that has been just made whole.

Although it has been heated with the breath, it was not hot.

Pang!

As the specially designed cap was opened, there came out a strong smell from inside. The smell of magical power that cannot be rejected by anyone with mana heart and mana brain, that even the family would get startled?

‘Let me drink it.’

It was impossible to control him-self.

Ian’s own reasoning, instinct and knowledge.

They were all one in the same.

Drink this flaming liquid.

There will never be regret.

Gulp!

Ian took the Elixir that was in the small bottle.

He brought the five breaths of the dragon to his mouth.

Then he immediately swallowed it down his throat.

The strange liquid that was burning in fire.

Then.

Flare!

The flare of fire has engulfed Ian.

It wasn’t a simple figure of speech.

With the powerful, rising flare of fire.

Ian's body has vanished.

Chapter 86

Five Breaths Of The Red Dragon (2)

(What, what is this?)

The first to react was the fairy queen. Ian has vanished from right before her eyes. He has vanished with the great flare of fire. What the heck? To where? Why? Very perplexed, she looked in the directions of spartoi, the undead dragon soldier and Evantus, the dragonian. However.

(The human... He has suddenly... Disappeared.)

Like the fairy queen, Spartoi appeared to be puzzled. Then he turned his head toward Evantus. Elixir, the liquid that Ian just drank, you did clearly say that you knew about it, isn't that right?

(But, I, I do not know the effects of the liquid!)

Feeling the stares of his family members, Evantus, the dragonian, was quick to explain. Has he not only had a chance to drink the liquid himself, nor has he ever seen any other dragonians drink it. It was only that he had applied his breath upon their requests. It was the same this time around.

(Would it... perhaps, the liquid is only allowed for them and them alone? And could this be just a side effect to a lowly, mere human that happened to have drunk it?)

The fairy queen provided a rather a reasonable hypothesis.

A drink that cannot be tolerated by human body.

That's what Ian had drunk.

(And the side effect of that... Is... Vanishing?)

(It is also possible that he could have been extinct as it couldn't be tolerated.)

The fairy queen dryly tossed out an eerie thought. If he really went extinct, that means

he had just died with the flare of fire. Not just anyone, but Ian Page.

(Reasonable... That seems... Reasonable.)

(I always believed that he wasn't someone that would easily die.)

(Before their power... human... are impotent.)

(Hey boney. Who doesn't know that? It seems true, all I'm saying!)

As the arguments between the two old natural enemies, the fairy queen and spartoi, ensued, there was a flash of light in the eyes of Evantus, the dragonian.

(...!)

It wasn't just Evantus. The fairy queen and spartoi also stopped their argument as if it was synchronized. They felt sudden change in the special energy that was inborn in them. To be precise, they felt the 'dissipation' of that special energy.

(The power of the family...)

The fairy queen murmured.

The power connected from Ian.

That is, the power of the dragon.

The energy called the power of the family.

(Dissipated?)

It wasn't just the fairy queen. Spartoi, the undead dragon soldier, and Evantus, the dragonian, that was just been defeated by the power of the family. It had dissipated from the body and spirit of those three members of the family. The absolute affect, the obedience towards Ian Page, that is.

(Truly... has he gone dead?)

The fairy queen murmured confused.

That was the only logical thought at this time.

With the flare of fire, he had vanished without a trace.

And even that absolute influence has dissipated.

(So... suddenly like this?)

To be sure, he was no ordinary human. He was born a human, yet reached an incredibly high level, and there was endless potential for him to continue to accomplish. Was that all? He could read and wield the magic of the dragon's language. As if he had been granted a gift, he had obtained the power of the family. His progress was extraordinary. It was an interesting story. But then.

(No way...)

It was Espel, who said, feeling vain.



It was pitch black all around.

It wasn't possible to see even an inch ahead.

It didn't appear to be an ordinary night.

There was not a single point of light.

It was as if it has been blocked by magic.

All the light and the energy that is similar to it.

'Is it sorcery again?'

Ian thought of an incidence from a few months ago.

The effect of magic from a portal artifact.

Of the sorcerer that had the same hair as he did.

But, the feeling was not the same from that time.

All his five senses were in normal conditions, right now.

He didn't feel even a touch of disharmony.

It would be perfect only if this darkness can be chased away.

'Light.'

A small ball of light has formed.

However, the power of the darkness was stronger than anticipated.

It felt as if though the light would be engulfed by it.

'Light.'

Ian has strengthened the light spell.

Finally, the light began to be shed at the surrounding area.

And.

"...?"

He doesn't get that easily spooked.

That is because this was his second life.

But, it was an exception this time around.

The large object that the light was shining on.

The entity was.

'Eye?'

It wasn't that of a human's.

It was the same as that of the dragonian.

The red eyeball, indicating that it wasn't a human.

The pupil that is vertically cut, like that of an amphibian.

One eye was as big as Ian.

And even more surprising thing was.

'It is observing. Observing me.'

That great big eye is looking at Ian.

I mean, it was leering at him.

'Could it...'

(You are.)

Instantly, Ian's all five senses have stiffened.

It was the same conversation style as that of the family.

That is, the voice that is heard through the mind, rather than via ears.

The voice that was heard as a human voice.

Except that the weight of the voice was overwhelming.

He was the grand sorcerer, who had once reached the 8th class level.

Even that Ian could not move.

Only from by hearing the voice, that is.

(You do not appear to be my physical body.)

"..."

(You are nothing, but a small creature.)

The commanding voice was overbearing.

He was feeling incredibly smaller before that entity.

It was the first time that Ian was having such a feeling, for certain.

‘Dragon...?’

As it was pitch black, its body couldn’t be seen. Only the eyes and its red leathery skin were visible, yet he was able to sense. How great its size and how overpowering the entity is.

(Respond. You that came into the repository of memory.)

The entity, which was a dragon by his best estimation, demanded a response. It appeared to be requesting to know the identity of Ian.

“Are... You a dragon?”

Ian asked overcoming its awe.

(That is right. But, I am not them that you are thinking of.)

A reply came back immediately.

It was an answer that couldn’t be understood.

Ian continued to make a conversation.

“I am not your adversary.”

(Is that so.)

“I do not wish to interfere, or have come to this place looking for something. All that I’ve done was to have drunk the Elixir that was made whole by the breath of a dragon.”

(I see.)

The voice demonstrated no emotions.

It didn’t appear that it would harm Ian at any moment.

That was so only from reading the feelings from the voice.

(Then.)

It was from right at that moment.

There were vibrations from all around.

It wasn't like any magic.

It just moved.

The body of the dragon, that is.

(Return.)

“...!”

It wasn't any magic or breath.

The palm of the dragon slapped down on Ian.

Should it be referred to the front leg or a hand.

Whatever it was, it was incredible.

It was incredibly fast and huge.

Kwwang!

If he was an ordinary life form, he would have been like meat going through a grinder, but wasn't Ian a life form that could wield magic? The strong mana barrier has protected Ian's body. Of course, it dwindled by that single palm smash.

The 6th class sorcerer's barrier, which wouldn't get scratched even all the sorcerers of the Ivory Tower were to attack him.

'Krrr...!'

Abnormally, overwhelming, power of destruction.

To say it again, it wasn't.

Not the magic of the dragon's language, or the breath of the dragon.

It was just a simple smashing slap of a hand.

‘Is this... A dragon?’

He felt threatened for his life, before at any time in the past.

I have to confront such an adversary? Under this condition?

I mean, it would be the same even at the level of the previous life.

A chance of winning? Nil.

Will die.

Absolutely.

‘I have to stop it. By any means.’

To understand what’s going on would not be an immediate concern.

There was only one that that must be done right away.

The way to stop the dragon’s attack.

That method must be found.

(You have mastered a small talent.)

It was still the same dull voice.

Of course, there was no stopping.

It was the tail, this time.

(Return.)

That heavy tail whipped around.

The target was clearly Ian.

It would be difficult to withstand it with the barrier.

To block that tail.

‘It cannot be dodged either.’

And the distance is too small for a blink spell.

And there is not enough time to dodge in to the air.

‘Ice block?’

The ice barrier that is indestructible.

But, Ian also gave up on that option.

Can it be blocked?

With just a mere ice block?

The attack of the dragon?

‘No.’

It was impossible.

Other means must be found.

In less than 1 second of time.

‘If that monster is a real dragon.’

Although, mana will be completely consumed.

This adversary couldn’t be defeated.

‘Magic of the dragon’s language.’

The dragon’s language that was foregone against the dragonian.

The dragon’s language after which he would be completely vulnerable from any attack.

It was that dangerous option that he must choose.

It would respond for certain if it was a dragon.

That is, to the magic of the dragon language that a human would wield.

(Drakoshi)

It was a magic of the dragon's language that varies from the one that he performed before the fairy queen, which was an attacking magic, causing red dragon's fire flare, this time around, the magic of the dragon's language focused on defense. Although all of the mana will be consumed, at least it will withstand that tail that has come close to him.

(Jentar.)

Drakosh, Jentar.

Dragon, scale.

Ian's dragon language has widely resonated.

It was a simpler speech than expected.

But, its effect was enormous.

"Krrr...!"

Ian's skin began to change.

I mean, it was being covered all over.

Covered with reddish scales.

Like the large dragon before Ian.

The scales were the same as that monster's.

Kwwaang!

Even the steel, reinforced with magic, wouldn't be able to withstand that power, but something amazing has happened. The tail of the dragon seemed to be a bit strange. As if it was being blocked by a column like obstacle, its tail was bent like a bow and froze in its place.

(...?)

That obstacle was none other than Ian, whose body was completely covered by the 'dragon's scale'. Of course, the scales didn't stay on him for very long. As soon as Ian's mana was fully consumed, they all disappeared like a mirage. It was truly the magic itself.

(Is that...?)

However, the monster that was believed to be a dragon was not surprised by Ian, having blocked the tail. It was only that it was surprised by the fact that the magic of the language of the dragon was being used. That was the most expected response. As long as the dragon's speech magic was used, any type of tail would be defended against, at any time.

"Whoa, Whooooa... Whooooa!"

Ian fell and sat there on the ground.

Taking a quick assessment, it appeared to have worked.

Even if all the mana has been consumed.

(You that came into the repository of memory.)

At last, the dragon like monster withdrew its tail. It no longer showed adversarial response. Instead, it approached Ian, dragging its massive body. With each step it took as it approached, caused great vibrations, and as that occurred, the darkness dissipated. Finally, its form was visible.

(I will ask one more time.)

Although its head looked like a lizard, it sported much rougher head, smoke coming out of its nostrils as if to be containing larva, three great horns on its head, teeth, massive body, wings, tail, red leathery skin and scales, and the gray mustache that wiggled as if it was alive.

(You are.)

That's how the monster looked.

The appearance that many humans think of.

The general appearance of a dragon.

It did not deviate from that appearance as existed in imaginations.

However, there was still a difference.

(What are you.)

It was the outpouring of overwhelming power beyond many hundred folds, many thousand folds from what was heard and seen through stories or from pictures, and the fact that it was an entity with so much power that even Ian, who had once reached the 8th class level, could not even fathom, was the unique difference, if there was any.

Chapter 87

Prove Your Worthiness (1)

(You're not my kind.)

"Yes. That is true."

(Not even my race.)

"Probably so, as I'm a human."

The face of a dragon was like a beast. Yet, it was possible to see. The twisted expression, the doubts it had in its eyes towards a little human, Ian Page.

(The human entity that was able to speak the language. Such existence is unique. There was no way that he couldn't recognize me, as I could not, not recognize him.)

"I am not the being that you are speaking of."

(Therefore, your existence is a paradox.)

The dragon continued with certainty.

(If you are not that, you must be my kind or a member of my race. That is the only way for it to be logical. The power that you have just displayed isn't something that can be easily imitated.)

The dragon's logic was simple.

A human cannot speak the dragon language.

There was only one, who was capable of doing so.

But you are not the one. I am certain.

Therefore, you must be a dragon.

'Why is he so stubborn?'

That troubled Ian greatly.

How should I respond?

To that stubborn dragon.

“... I do not know what this place is, but all the dragons have been extinct from the world that I belong to. Do you know that?”

(Extinct?)

The dragon's countenance changed when he heard Ian.

It appears to be in agony.

(I have had a feeling as I have not been visited for a while.)

It has been over hundreds, or even thousand years since the dragons have disappeared, but 'only for a while'?

'The concept of time has completely been dismantled.'

If that was so, then it would be possible to equate hundreds or even thousands of years as 'a while'. Especially, by a dragon who has no concept of time.

(But that fact and your existence do not have a connection.)

“Yes, there is a connection.”

Ian's voice sounded confident.

It is because what he had thought has become true.

'It has no knowledge of the outside world.'

What does that mean? It means that it has no knowledge of anything that had happened for at least the past hundreds of years. That is.

'It must have been confined here for hundreds of years since.'

Of course, I am not sure where this place is.

'Repository of memory' was the only name that he had heard.

There was one truth that he could be certain of.

All of this dragon's words and knowledge

'Have been stalled in the memory of the time since long ago.'

Before the disappearance of the dragons.

The retained memory of only those times.

The being that holds those memories intact.

(What is the connection that you are speaking of?)

That old being opened its mouth.

Ian also replied calmly.

"By any chance, do you know the queen of the fairies?"

(Of course. It's part of my race and of the same race. It had a heart of a gentle little child. Why are you asking?)

Not so sure about having a gentle heart.

It's long time ago, so that could have been possible.

"She has been waiting for the dragons that disappeared for nearly one thousand years. They even set up a permanent home for the family at what used to be their nest.

(Thousand years...?)

Dragon murmured confusingly. Even to the dragon race that lives forever, a thousand years of time is rather long.

"May not be exactly one thousand years, but us, humans consider dragons as only as legends, or perhaps as a creature of imagination."

The dragon has lost for words for a while.

It appeared to have been in great shock.

That was obvious from its countenance.

"I have also thought so, like all the others. However, I am, somehow, in the middle of

all the traces that were left by you. Ah, rather than traces, could be all planned, perhaps.”

Ian continued like flowing water.

He chose the truth rather than a lie.

“The dragon speech magic that I had used, along with it, I have obtained the book of the dragon language, and obtained the power of being the family. The fairy queen that I have spoken of is with me. The liquid, Elixir, which had sent me here, has also been produced with the help of a Dragonian.”

Of course, only parts of truths were revealed.

The fact that he has returned from a previous life,

The fact that he has used the golden dragon race’s language,

He did not want to reveal that much, at least not yet.

“A long time has passed. Many things have changed. Even if you were to ask me who I am, the only answer that I can give you is that I am a human. I can only reveal that I’m a human, who has had some contacts with your kind.”

Ian stopped there.

He let out everything that he could have possibly said.

The conclusion must be made by the dragon that was before him.

(... By any chance, are there more humans that are like you in this world? Does anyone else who exist that can speak the language of dragons as a human being, was what was being asked.)

“No, as far as I know, there isn’t any other.”

(Is that so...)

The dragon closed his big eyes.

It appeared to have fallen into a deep thought.

‘I always assumed that it existed.’

Suddenly, its form came into Ian's eyes. He was sure of the existence of the dragons as he met the kind family and by practicing the dragon speech magic. Still, it was mysterious. He was also fearful. How powerful is this being? Even taking a small guess was impossible to do.

'Is it possible to reach?'

After attaining the 8th class level, Ian often thought of those things. Although it was not visible, but by any chance if he was to reach the 9th class then wouldn't it be possible to stand shoulder to shoulder, with the dragons?

'Perhaps...'

But he felt it difficult, now that he is face to face.

That is, to be certain of his thoughts and confidence during those times.

(I have heard your story. It is interesting.)

When his thoughts ended, the voice of the dragon was heard. It differed from earlier. The tone of the voice was softer. The doubt that showed through his expression was no longer there, it seemed. At least that's how Ian felt.

(First, the liquid that you have drunk was not the secret potion called, Elixir. It was only a key to this place, the repository of memory, and that the child that had completed that key was most likely of race of my kind's half breed descendant, called the Dragonians.)

"He said his name was Evantus."

(Right, Evantus. That was the right name. As the key was completed by that child's breath, of all the countless repositories, you've come to this one.)

Ian felt curious upon hearing the dragon's words.

The expression that he has been hearing for a while now,

The repository of time

He has become very curious of that.

“Would it be OK to ask a question?”

(Speak.)

“What is the repository of time?”

Ian asked without losing a moment.

Dragon also spoke without pausing.

(My kind and my race can easily live forever. However, every detail of their experiences during that time is not remembered. So, old memories are kept in this repository.)

Ian could understand the dragon’s explanation.

The entity before him was the ‘spiritual form’ of that.

‘A spiritual form that has the very ancient memory.’

As Ian did not repeat his question, the dragon’s spiritual form continued its explanation as it sensed that the very little human sorcerer understood it.

(My kind and any of their races can come to me, at anytime, and ask for any needed memory, or some memory that they want to remember. They can even listen to vivid answers as I always live as the spiritual form among the separated moments.)

Repository of memory.

The name was indeed appropriate.

Isn’t this the storage of memory?

“I see. Thank you for the explanation.”

(Did you drink the Elixir, wanting power?)

“... I will not deny.”

(You must be disappointed. Rather than power, all you’ve gotten was only ancient memory.)

True, he was disappointed. But soon he thought differently. Although these were memories of more than hundreds and thousands of years old, they were still the memories of the supernatural dragons. Surely, there lies much value.

“Is it.”

Ian asked cautiously.

“Can I view those memories as well?”

(Unfortunately, you do not have that right.)

Ian nodded his head.

He already knew it.

He had only asked just in case.

(However.)

As he was about to give up on it,

The voice of dragon continued.

(You seem a bit special.)

Seem special?

A hope came to Ian.

(If you desire, I shall make you equal to my race or grant powers of the beings that are same as my kind’s most powerful friend and teacher.)

My kind’s friend and teacher.

Only that part caught his attention.

As equal to the dragon’s teacher.

Is it the entity that was mentioned a moment ago?

The unique existence among the humans?

Ian kept his ears opened.

(But, you must show that you are worthy.)

“How can I show that?”

(Simple.)

The dragon said as if it wasn't much.

After pausing a moment, it adjusted its words.

(... I mean, it may be well fitting for you.)

Along with the new statement, the dragon's wings opened. Then the darkness that surrounded has dissipated in a blink of an eye. As wide open space as there is. No, the wide open space was not the fitting expression as it opened up an unlimited space that was dark, yet bright like inner self.

(Is it bothersome? This is the landscape that embodies the supernatural chamber, called space. It is not the actual space, but it is the same.)

'Space...?'

Ian could not comprehend.

Yet, he did not repeat his question.

Since the real important thing was something else.

"The way to prove my worthiness, please tell me."

(You have to defeat me.)

"... What?"

Ian asked again.

Perhaps, it was heard wrong?

Defeat who and by whom?

(Did I not say? It may be fitting for you.)

"..."

Ian couldn't make any sense. He nearly swore at the dragon. Although it was only a spiritual form, it was clearly still a dragon. He even witnessed the incredible power that dismantled his barrier with a single motion of its hand. However, do what now?

(You do not need to worry. This is a chamber of no dimensions. You will not die. All injuries are not real, and the pain that you feel is also not real. On top of that, I am not

allowed to enjoy the powers that come with being a dragon. Not to mention the breath, the power of the language, or even a tiny little magic. I am just as equal as a wild beast.)

All powers cannot be used?

Even the magic and breath?

Ian's ears perked up.

(If you do not want it, I will happily let you out. You will lose nothing as you've come to this place like person that was lost.)

Dragon's words were considerate.

However, those words have motivated Ian.

A beast that cannot use the dragon's language, magic, or the breath.

'On top of that, everything is not real.'

No death and no injuries.

As this space it-self is not real.

Isn't it worth taking the chance?

'Certainly.'

Ian made the final decision.

He looked at the dragon with his deep gazing eyes.

"I will try."

(Ahhh.)

Did Ian's response deviate from expectation?

The dragon's expression showed rising interest.

No, it did not appear to be a simple case of interest.

If to express it more out rightly...

'Nice catch as I was bored to death.'

That's right. Ian was certain.

That it was the expression of such interest.



It has been three months since Ian has disappeared with the flash of light.

The empire is in the middle of an epic crisis.

“Has the tower lord not returned yet?”

“No. Even the family members do not know his whereabouts.”

“He did not hide himself on purpose?”

“It was so according to the interrogation magic.”

“Huh, where has he gone?”

Ronan, the 4th class high ranking sorcerer, who was temporarily left in charge of the Ivory Tower Lord’s responsibilities, murmured as he wrapped around his forehead. In such situation, during which everything is in crisis both in and out of the empire, where could Ian Page, the Ivory Tower Lord, who was supposed to control the crisis be?

“Call for a meeting. All ordained magicians must attend.”

Chapter 88

Prove Your Worthiness (2)

The great hall, where the high sorcerers Deckard and Ronan, as the leaders, and all the other sorcerers are gathered. Yet, it was half of the total population. Where is the other half? Everyone has been dispatched to the south west of the Morgrian territory, that is, the border of the Coldwood Empire.

“Any changes in the emperor’s conditions?”

It was the voice Deckard, the gray haired, high ranking sorcerer. Calm Deckard took charge of the meeting, rather than Ronan, who has a fiery temperament.

“They aren’t even able to determine the cause. The palace doctors, not to mention the outside doctors that were invited are in the same boat.”

“No trace of poison or magic at all?”

“Both by us, the Ivory Palace, and the palace alchemists have verified it and obtained the same result. For now, it is assumed that his health has suddenly deteriorated...”

The empire was certainly in crisis. Within, the Emperor ‘Terry Greenriver’ fell ill to deteriorating health. It was much earlier than the 6 years of lifespan that Ian had first estimated.

“What is the situation on Coldwood? Are there any new intel from the military, palace, intelligence network of the Ivory Tower, or any private organizations?”

“We do not have anything new to report at this time.”

“Hmmm...”

The situation in the outside was also concerning. Not long ago, a letter was unilaterally received from the Coldwood Empire. It was a letter, informing its intention to exit the alliance operation, as promised in the three nation agreement, to subjugate the monsters that reached the great eastern prairie.

“No, that can’t be!”

Ronan, the high ranking sorcerer spoke with angry voice.

“Even in my thoughts, if I was the leading member of the Coldwood government! Now would be the chance. A chance to invade the territory!”

The reason for being able to quickly execute Herbert, the former tower lord, wasn’t because there was no voice of opposition. The reason wasn’t because Herbert’s crime was just simply atrocious. It was possible because Ian Page, the great 6th class sorcerer, the sharp weapon, was there. However now, the whereabouts of Ian, the weapon, has become a mystery.

“They must have sensed it. All the situations that we have to deal with! Isn’t Coldwood the clan that bet their lives on intelligence since long time ago?”

The emperor, the 1st in the empire, fell due to illness. The tower lord of the Ivory Tower, who is like the 2nd in charge, has disappeared.

There are no longer any 5th class and the 6th class sorcerers within the Greenriver Empire. That is, there is a big void in the empire’s defense. A gigantic hole, that is.

“What’s going on with the alliance with the Ro Principality?”

“We are expecting a report from the delegation to the Principality soon. Perhaps, by the time we begin the military meeting this evening. Everything rides on that.”

Ronan and Deckard, who have been temporarily delegated the powers of the Ivory Tower, had to attend countless meetings each day. There wasn’t a moment of reprieve from the grilling schedule as they had to attend meetings, dealing with the Ivory Tower, the palace, the government, the military, and the alliance issues. That’s how much in crisis the going concerns have become in and out.

“If the Principality decides to join hands with us, we would have a breather, but if not... Then we must aggressively prepare for the worst.”

Aggressive preparation.

What would that mean?

Greenriver and Coldwood.

The war between two great empires.

It would mean entering wartime state.

“Ivory Tower, do not let down your guards even for a minute.”

It was when Deckard’s warning was being permeated.

“Sir, Deckard! Sir Ronan!”

A young sorcerer, the go between the Ivory Tower and the outside, came running into the meeting hall, panting.

There must have been an urgent issue.

“What is it?”

“It, it broke down!”

“Broke down? Tell us the details.”

“A, a word came from the delegate to the Principality, and...”

Without hearing the nexus, the nexus could be heard.

The most optimal solution at this time.

The alliance between Greenriver and Principality.

That’s what has broken down.

‘Sir Ian...’

Ultimately, everyone could only imagine one thing.

The only one that can resolve this issue.

The name Ian Page, the tower lord of the Ivory Tower.



As the winds of war whirled over the continent.

Ian Page, the tower lord of the Greenriver Empire's Ivory Tower, was still inside the repository of time. On top of that, he had to battle with the nameless, spiritual form of the dragon. He has not eaten, bathed, or slept.

Was that the reason? As was the case for the dragon's spiritual form, the concept of time slowly began to deteriorate for Ian.

'For crying out loud.'

It has been '1 day' since the battle to prove his worthiness had started.

Unlike him, who is all bent out of shape, the dragon was in great physical shape. He realized it only after one day had passed, the fact that the battle was absolutely only from his point of view.

'This is worse than the dragon's undead soldier?'

That was true. Even if it was only a spiritual form that cannot use the powers, its skin and the spikes were already perfect shields. It was as strong as Spartoi, if not stronger.

'Good thing it is not real.'

However, it seemed more realistic than trying to defeat a dragon's undead soldier in the real world. How come? This world is not real. Everything was unreal. If one was to focus on right consciousness, everything would be refilled. All the mana that had been lost, that is.

'If there were unlimited mana, there was a chance.'

So, he did not lose hope.

It was still a challenge worth taking the risk.

He felt that there was sufficient possibility.

That was, before it reached the '25th day'.

(Are you giving up already?)

"I've run the numbers, but not yet, at least from the human's perspective."

The dragon's spiritual form spoke to Ian, who was lying flat, dead tired.

In this world, it was difficult to feel the time of the outside. Day or night, even worse, there was no hunger or sleep in this world.

(Just say the word. I will let you to outside.)

"I am not leaving yet, I said?"

(It's only more pleasing for me then.)

The dragon was sincere. He was enormously enjoying the 'meeting' with Ian and perhaps, even this 'cat and mouse' game that it is playing with Ian. It must have been extremely bored as the enormous fear that he felt at the beginning was no longer there.

'Is that the true form.'

Even if it was a spiritual form, the characteristics, voice, habits and all the aspects must have been duplicated. Just because it was a dragon does not mean it's all solemn, feared or dignified. Wasn't it the case based on the verbal conflicts seen by the fairy queen and Spartoi, the dragon's undead soldier?

'The dragon that had left the note...? No way!'

The note that was with the book that had the family's spell, when the ancient dragon's book was first discovered... It was similar to the face in the note in many ways.

'Not all the dragons are of that shape... '

As more terrible images were being drawn.

Ian could not complete his thoughts.

As great shadow fell over him.

From below the fallen body.

(Rest ends now.)

It was the front paw of the dragon.

The front paw that will even dismantle the barrier!

Kwaang!

The result was the same this time as well. It was tough to dodge even when fully prepared to react, it was worse when being ambushed. If the barrier that was created with all his might wasn't shielding him, he would have certainly died. Of course, although it would all be unreal, it still won't be fun either.

(You surprise me every time. The being that cannot apply the power of the magical language of the original technique, it's only reason for the creation was for the talent in helping to catch those small creatures. It's hard to fathom that you have advanced that little talent to this far.)

The dragon murmured, withdrawing his front paw.

His eyes showed sincere admiration.

"Those words, are they even sincere at all?"

(Of course.)

"I believe that you wouldn't speak such things while obliterating with a single kick."

(Think for yourself. A bug came back alive, unharmed after being punished with a deadly kick. Instead of good luck, it survived through a self advanced method. Wouldn't that be miraculous?)

Ian has been equated to a bug instantly.

He wanted to give him a good punch in any way.

As the mankind's greatest sorcerer, he wanted to deliver a strike to that conceited dragon's spiritual form.

'He even slowly began to be concerned about the happenings in the outside world.'

The stoic time passed by endlessly.

The 31st day, the concept of time has been dismantled.

The 49th day, there was still no possibility.

The 68th day, it was all the same like before.

The 82nd day, he began to feel the desire to give up.

And on the '90th day' that he welcomed with the same attitude

Changes began to occur in Ian's body.

'Mana heart...'

The training with the dragon's undead soldier. As the tickling feeling of mana heart, from the intolerable training, was being alleviated, and advancement has been finally achieved.

'7th class. No, perhaps...'

Ian has assessed the growth of the mana heart.

He looked up upon the dragon's spiritual form.

He clearly saw transformed expression.

Overflowing audaciousness and even giving smiles.

"It will be a bit different."

(What is?)

“Different from up to now.”

Then exactly after 10 days.

As the 10th day started.

Kwang!

The dragon's spiritual form has finally fallen over. Although it could not use any powers, including the dragon's language and it was already extremely weakened, being a spiritual form. None the less, he has succeeded in knocking it over. A dragon's being was overcome by a mere human sorcerer.

(Tremendous.)

Then an exactly same looking dragon came down from the sky above. At the same time, the fallen dragon's body disappeared as if it has been evaporated. This was a no dimensional world, everything was unreal. Also, the dragon is a spiritual form only, as such, its physical being did not exist.

(The fact that he did not give up to the end and even achieving growth while at it. Was it one thousand years? The outside world must have gone through changes for sure.)

It was the dragon's sincere compliment.

It did not make him feel too bad.

It was just that he wanted to check before receiving the praise.

“Have I shown my worthiness?”

(Worthiness?)

“Did you not say that to defeat you was a proof of worthiness? The right to view the memories and the worthiness of that right.”

(Yes, I did say that.)

“...”

(You need not look that way. I was only a little surprised.)

Ian was full of suspicion.

Has it been overwhelmed by that look?

The dragon began to explain.

(OK. As you have demonstrated your worthiness, I will grant you the power, equal to the powers of my kind's race, or my kind's most strong ally and teacher. Right now. From this moment forward.)

Ian just blinked his eyes although the dragon has finished speaking. He thought it would continue. For instance, maybe some form of ceremony, using the dragon's language or some proclamation, etc.)

"... Is it done?"

He waited endless, but it was the same.

He only felt the unique silence of the repository of time.

(What more do you need?)

"No, that's not what I meant."

He felt as if he was being played.

Yet, Ian kept his cool.

Instead, he spoke of things that he needed to ask.

Since I am worthy, I should know how to use it.

"How can it be used?"

(Use what?)

"To view the memories..."

(Ask.)

"... Beg your pardon?"

(If you ask, I will give you an answer.)

"..."

Ian has lost for words.

Being played was not enough, have I been fooled as well?

(Do you want the spread of memories? That is not beneficial to you. You will not even be able to tolerate it. Will you be able to handle the eternal time that spreads thousands of years?)

The dragon spoke in a very serious tone.

Well, it wasn't an inappropriate explanation either.

After all, wouldn't that be the memories of the dragon?

It was unknown whether he can tolerate it or not.

"... Will you give an answer no matter what?"

(Yes. You have proven your worthiness.)

"I understand. Then first."

The very first question to be asked. If it was a Q&A session, then there was something that he must verify, rather than the spread of memories.

"Elixir. If I was to drink that key again, will I meet you at that time as well?"

It wasn't possible to ask all the questions in one day.

So the feasibility must be learned first.

That is, whether the entity is something that he can see at anytime.

(Evantus, my kind's half breed descendant. If the key was made whole by that child's breath then it is possible at any time. However, a key that was made complete by a descendant of another race, it would be a different story. Keep that in mind.)

That is, if there were ingredients, he can always come back here at any time.

Ian asked the next question as his anxiousness subsided a bit.

“Among the ingredients of the key, there is the eye of a gargoyle.”

(Gargoyle. Yes, I know.)

“Where can I find a gargoyle?”

(Hm?)

The dragon tilted his long head as that question was asked.

(Isn't it a common creature? As there were so many of them, they were the main culprits in destroying the balance of the nature. So they were used as ingredients for the key.)

“... That is not so in the present time. I have only seen twice, I mean only once in all my life. I've used the key with the eyes that I've obtained at that time.”

(That is unexpected... Even for me.)

There were even some things that weren't known to him.

It appeared as if he was being fooled after all.

‘It still remains.’

If there was a slight of good news from all of this, the quantity of gargoyle's eyes needed to make the key was very small. It was possible to make several more bottles with the remaining powder of the eyes.

‘Let me go on to the next topic for now.’

Ian calmed himself. He verified what he needed to verify. Although there were other things that he needed to ask, he was more concerned with what was happening in the outside world. As a lot of time may have passed, even though he wasn't certain.

‘I would inspect outside world first and return.’

Ian decided quickly.

He looked into the eyes of the dragon.

There was one thing that he wanted to find out even at the cost of saving other questions for later.

“What are you?”

(I believe I had answered that question on the first day.)

“I want to know your name, rather than simply as a spiritual form, or the repository of memory.”

(Name...)

The dragon couldn't respond readily.

Was it because it does not exist in the physical world.

It seemed somewhat uncomfortable.

That is, to say its name.

(My name is.)

Finally, its voice was heard.

(Reeses, Radenju.)

Reeses Radenju.

The name was familiar even to Ian.

The name that he had heard from the fairy queen.

That name was being relayed to his head.

One letter by one letter, they were clearly being inlaid.

(That is the name given to me.)

Chapter 89

To Mitigate, And More (1)

(That is, that is the name given to me.)

The voice of Radenju, the dragon, continued.

(He is also the leader of all the dragon clans.)

The amazing story continued. The leader. Doesn't that mean the leader among all the dragons? He came to a level of understanding as to why the fairy queen sought out 'Reeses Radenju'.

(Not me of course, but my own true self.)

Radenju, the spirit of the dragon's leader added lightly. Still there wouldn't be any changes as far as being the same entity. At least about one thousand years ago, that is.)

"I've heard a lot about it from the fairy queen."

(That child did particularly follow my true self. Hard to believe that a cry baby like that has become a queen. It is amazing.)

"A crybaby..."

Ian suddenly stopped speaking.

Wouldn't it be the case about a thousand years ago?

She could have been a crybaby back then.

Yes, definitely.

'Although it is not fitting at all.'

That's how Ian had concluded.

Then he came back to the main topic of the conversation.

"I'd like to ask one more question."

(Speak.)

“Evantus, the dragonian, has a descendant. It was told that his descendants must be granted the permission of time, is that possible for you?”

This was the question regarding the lifetime given to them, to the descendants of Evantus, the Dragonian. Should Ian be able to provide a solution to that problem, wouldn't they be prone to follow more diligently, and wholeheartedly?

(That's impossible. My authority is limited only within this space that I cannot alter the outcome of the outside. However, if they fail to find my true self and the clan then it is acceptable to send them here. They can live endlessly, at least in this space.)

The flow of time is always possible within this space.

As such, if they wish to continue to live, do send them here.

That's what it was getting at.

“I will relay that message.”

(Hm.)

It is impossible to resolve it completely, but the concern over the immediate death can be alleviated. Although it was said that the remaining life time was about one hundred years, that time seemed very short to the descendants.

“Is it impossible for you to surmise as to where the dragons, in the outside world, might have disappeared to?”

(I do not know. However, my true self should be alive.)

“How can you be sure?”

(Because I continue to exist.)

Ian was able to understand without too much difficulty.

If the true self dies, so does its spirit.

Wouldn't that what it means?

(And.)

The dragon continued to speak.

(Should there be issues with the safeties of my true self and the family members, there can only be two reasons. First, internal struggles as only its same kind can bring about harm to the dragons.)

It was a rather conceited statement, but was not untrue at all. Even the spiritual being, without any powers, is as powerful as this, how powerful would the real dragons be?

‘They would be nearly invincible.’

That was it.

Most likely, an invincible entity.

No other description would be more fitting.

(However, there is always an exception. Eliminating the true self and the same kind, there is only one existence that can bring harm to the dragons.)

“Who is that?”

Ian knew the answer even as he asked.

It was the existence that has been continually mentioned.

It must be the human that speaks the dragon language.

Perhaps, it would be ‘the first sorcerer’?

(He is the very human that had created the magic that you wield, and trained the dragons with the power of the language. He could be called the teacher to all the dragons, I suppose.)

“What...”

It was the most shocking thing that he has heard from the dragon. Although he had assumed it, he couldn’t even imagine such a thing. How can a mere human be the teacher of the dragons?

“Is the dragon language a language of the dragons?”

(Have I ever used the expression dragon language, even once?)

“...”

Right, that was right, come to think of it.

There really wasn't. Definitely wasn't used.

It was only referred to as the power of the language.

From the first encounter and until now.

(How it was known to the humans in the outside world is not certain, but it is not a language of the dragons. It is only an indigenous language that has great power.)

When the dragon spoke that much, the landscape of the space of no dimension, made after the place called space, changed. Green pasture spread widely and multitudes of dragons were flying in the air.

"This..."

(Do not be shocked. This space is a recreation of my will, the landscape of my memory. Perhaps, this is of time long ago.)

Ian looked upon the landscape that spread out widely with interest. Where would it be? Where would such spacious and green pasture be in the continent? There was no way for him to know, no matter how hard he tried to think.

(There, do you see?)

In the direction that the dragon was looking at.

There, far off in the pasture, dragons gathered.

And a small entity that was among them.

"Human?"

Ian approached the group of dragons and the human. Although Ian could see them, the virtual beings could not see him.

"...?"

Ian was left shocked as he and the human, deemed to be the first sorcerer, were within a reach from one another. It was certainly a familiar face.

'The sorcery, it was definitely the man in the sorcery.'

The same brown hair that Ian had.

And a rather unattractive appearance.

It was that person for sure.

And he began to remember at the same time.

The warning that he had spoken of.

[Never trust the dragon.]

It was the entity, deemed to be the teacher of the dragons.

They were the words spoken by that entity.

(What's the matter? Do you recognize him?).

"No, no. Just that he looks familiar..."

(Understandable. All humans look similar.)

Dragon dismissed it as if it was nothing.

Then he opened his wings in all directions.

In parallel, the surrounding landscape was dismantled.

They have returned to the original place where they were before.

To the space of dark and light, the space of no dimensions, where he had fought for his life.

(Are there anything else that you wanted to ask?)

The dragon asked.

Ian fell into a thought for a moment.

Many things passed through his mind.

Then he concluded.

"... Yes, there are many, but it is not the right time."

(I see. Do you wish to leave then?)

“Yes.”

(Very well.)

Dragon nodded his head as Ian replied unshakably. Ian was in no hurry as he could always come back and ask later.

(And.)

“Please speak.”

Then the dragon kept his silence.

Then just as Ian was about to ask what is the matter.

The dragon’s words resumed.

(Do comeback.)

“Pardon?”

(I am bored.)

Ian gave a smile to that comment.

It did not make him feel too bad.

It was an invitation of the dragon lord.

At what other times can such an invitation be extended to him, again?

(Then, I will let you out.)

The dragon did clearly say that it will let him go.

Then why is the dragon raising his front paw?

It even started to pounce down on him.

Towards Ian.

“Aaak!”

Ian definitely initiated barrier spell.

Despite that, the barrier did not form.

There was not enough mana in Ian’s body.

In other words, this place was meant for the will of spirit.

His words and thoughts become the space.

It wants to empty Ian's mana?

Only at that moment, the mana will empty.

Like right now.

(When will you be back.)

The spirit of the dragon lord, 'Reeses Radenju', raised the front paw. Surprisingly, there was no one. If it was a real space, Ian would have certainly become a carcass, however, there wasn't anything close, let alone carcass.

(Little bit more...)

The dragon's spirit murmured a few words as it lied down on the ground, and as soon as it closed its two eyes, darkness fell upon them. As it always has been, it was about to fall deep into the repetitious sleep.

(I wish you would come back stronger...)

It was a very sleepy voice.

(... It was fun for a change in a long while.)

It did not lose to Ian.

Even though it was only a spiritual entity.

Even though it wasn't able to wield the powers.

It was the leader of all the dragons.

It was certainly not an easy opponent.

Only if there was a reason.

(I mean, is it the first time. As far as I...)

It has been a first in a long time.

It was enjoyable for the very first time.

The short, fun reward.

Perhaps, that would be the reply.



“... The first thing it wanted to do when it saw me was to kill me.”

Ian has returned to the real world.

To the same place that he had disappeared from with a flash of light.

It has been 100 days, although he didn't realize it.

“Was that why.”

Even the unreal images gave him the shivers.

As he was about to helplessly face death.

He didn't even want to imagine it.

‘Gosh, is this the only way to come out from that world each time... ’

No way. It can't be?

The dragons have had always gone and come.

‘No way.’

Believing it as such, Ian checked his heart first, more specifically, the mana heart. Perhaps, could the growth in the mana heart also be not real? That idea came to worry him.

‘Let see. It's been sustained.’

What he had worried did not come to pass. The result was that by ‘the red dragon's five breaths’, he has achieved the growth that had previously been held back.

Of course, even the training with the dragon's undead soldier was still good. Without that grilling training, such growth would have taken much longer time. All the efforts have derived such results.

‘My family must be worrying about me.’

Ian executed fly magic in order to return.

‘Ah.’

He then returned to the ground.

‘From now on...’

Ian summoned all the mana.

A bright white light converged in his hand.

The converged light looked like crystal.

‘There is no need to be flying around.’

He crushed the light with the tip of his fingers.

Then immediately, intense light shot out.

At the same time, it swallowed up Ian’s body.

It’s ‘spatial transport magic’, a 7th class level magic.

‘Teleportation.’

The destination of the spell was the great house.

It was the home of Ian and his family.

He arrived in a blink of an eye.

“Dear!”

Vanessa, his mother was right there in front of his eyes.

Espel, the pink cat was there also.

“I, Ian?”

(You, you bastard?)

The intermingled voices of two women were heard.

Has it been that long that they appear so shocked?

Or was it because he appeared out of nowhere?

“Ian!”

Vanessa grabbed Ian’s hand, having rushed toward him.

Quite a bit of time must have passed by.

At least by a few weeks already...

“Where have you been for over three months...”

“... Three months?”

He jumped off by several folds by any conservative measure.

For three months, I mean it has been longer than that.

“Anyhow! There is not much time to waste like this. Ian, quickly do go to the Ivory tower. The entire empire is a one big mess!”

Ian was able to hear all the happenings for the past one hundred days. Although they weren’t very detailed, it was sufficient enough to get a good grasp, from the sudden deterioration of the emperor’s health to the unstable situations among the empires.

“Hmmm...”

It was more serious than thought. Especially, the emperor’s health issue concerned him. Like it was in the previous life, there were many questions. Besides, it even started sooner by 6 years. Certainly, it did not appear to be a natural degradation.

“Previous life, as well as in present.’

Even in the past life, the emperor’s death had stirred up all sorts of rumors concerning poison, sorcery, curse and the like. It was the same this time around. There must be an outside influence. He had a guess. Ragnar, dragonian, the order of the dragons. Many things have crossed his mind.

‘First, the war must be prevented, I suppose.’

It was also the same case with the war. It was too soon. Well, in the first place, Ian had no intention of starting a war, not even one bit. The one thing that he had regretted the most was war. Is it not that he wasn’t about to repeat it?

‘Unless of course the unification of the continent takes place... ’

It cannot be a result of a war. It was the state that only he, Ian Page, alone must achieve. It will be the case where all the empires will kneel before his awesome power.

“I’ll be back.”

Ian said to Vanessa.

Along with that, he gathered the light with his finger tips.

The white light formed in the shape of a hexagonal crystal.

It was the effect of the teleportation technique.

“To mitigate the situation.”



“A non-aggression agreement has been reached with the Ro Principality. As long as the conditions are satisfied, there will not be any concerns over any unilateral dismantling, my lord.”

‘Hector Coldwood’, the crowned prince of the Coldwood Empire, who has taken over the absolute powers, unlike Greenriver, nodded.

“Very good for a ladder of opportunity...”

Holding a glass of wine, his hand shook with ecstasy. The chance called, a ladder of opportunity has never been let by. Chance was always taken advantage of. He has reached his status of power by taking every chance to strengthen and killing competition at every opportunity.

“It must be strong”

His intuition, the planted intelligence network, and the results of the negotiation are all whispering into his ears. This opportunity must be the most ideal one, the greatest legacy that any person can leave behind, the first step to achieving a ‘continental unification’.

“Hm.”

Hector Coldwood wet his lips with wine. After avoiding the surveillance of the Greenriver Empire, he has arrived at 'Amber Territory', the eternal foe of the Morgrian Territory.

"Good."

Hector Coldwood exited the tent with determination. There was even already a military camp, formed by secretly gathered troops.

"A message has gone out to Greenriver as well."

Of course, everything moved discretely.

It had travelled through countless number of camps.

Still, the vestige and being witnessed were inevitable.

The message should have been delivered by now, I believe.

'Although useless.'

Putting on a slight smile, Hector Coldwood moved to the top of the platform. The platform was high enough to see every troop that was gathered there.

"War is an opportunity."

Hector began to speak to the troops at once.

The crystal ball of sound amplifier helped increase the volume.

"This is the opportunity to climb to a higher place, the opportunity to reach the high land, where more treasures are hidden. Doesn't it only occur to the people of high stature? No, it happens to you too. In fact, it is more useful to common soldiers, like you."

He used the expression, 'common soldier', to his own men without hesitation. Yet, there wasn't even a slight sign of resentment. On the contrary, it has drawn the eyes and ears of the 'common soldiers' to Hector.

"As soon as you cross the borders with your swords and spears drawn, everything that comes into your view is the opportunity. If you wish to, do plunder until your heart is satisfied. If you wish, do rape until your heart contends. If you wish to kill, kill as you please. I, Hector Coldwood, guarantee that the opportunity that you have over there, everything that you would hold, will be yours.

It was none other than for the common soldiers.

A speech that is made on behalf of the common soldier's existence.

The troops' spirits were uplifted by that speech.

"Do you feel victimized by being in a war? If that is the case, plunder all you want, beyond the borders to make up for your regrets. Take back to your homeland with an armful. Properties, bitches, or whatever it is...!"

It was when the speech has just begun touching on the main topic. A stream of white light converged at the platform that Hector was standing on. It wasn't obvious, initially, as it was a very small light.

"...?"

But the light grew more vivid little by little.

Was that all? It even began to form a shape.

Arm, hand, leg, body and even a head.

It was a shape of a human being.

"The speech is so eerie."

The light eventually formed into a human shape.

Out of that light came a physical voice.

It was a voice of a human.

"Who, Who is it!"

The troops gathered around the mysterious figure.

They surrounded the human shaped light in a circle.

At the same time, they blockaded the surrounding areas near the crowned prince.

"What could it be?"

With that silent rhetorical question.

The human shaped light formed a color.

Into a color of human being, not of a white light.

The color of the skin was on the side of a light tone

The hair color changed into light brown.

The wide opened eyes turned into green color.

It formed into a shape of someone very well known.

“I.”

Chapter 90

To Mitigate, And More (2)

The entity formed from the stream of white light. Ian Page, the tower lord of the Greenriver Empire's Ivory Tower, felt objectionable. The speech that was made by Hector Coldwood, the crowned prince of Coldwood, was the issue.

"Plunder, rape and kill."

He thought of his family when he heard those words. The faces of those that he was acquainted with by chance or fate also flashed by. Although the number was small, wasn't every one of them the target of the speech?

"Such a trash talk."

Ian said, clicking his tongue.

He had acted like that in his past life.

It was the same this time around as well.

It definitely wasn't pleasing to him.

That crowned prince of the Coldwood Empire.

That bastard, Hector Coldwood.

"You...?"

Hector recognized Ian. They have met twice at the negotiation table while developing the three nations' non-aggression pact on the Great East Prairie.

"How did you...?"

They could not react in any other way, but be shocked. Hector Coldwood, the crowned prince, was in shock for certain, but also the troops, knights and even the sorcerers that have gathered there to form the military base.

'There's no doubt...'

Ian Page, the bastard sorcerer, had surely disappeared. A half year ago, citing end of training, he went missing for 3 months, after which there was not even a trace of him for the subsequent 3 months, for a total of 6 months period.

‘Perhaps, he had died of an accident during the training.’

Perhaps, the accident had taken place a long time ago, and simply took it as taking holidays in order to hide that fact. There were many, different guesses, but it was certain in the end that Ian Page has been erased from the world.

‘He did not disappear?’

Hector Coldwood ground his teeth.

He was troubled. Feeling of dismay overtook him.

It was an opportunity none like any other.

Indeed, it was clearly thought to be the best opportunity.

With more caution, speed and accuracy

That’s how this war has been prepared.

‘This ladder of opportunity has gone bad.’

The ladder has been weaved with decayed ropes.

Has such a bad opportunity been what was grabbed?

Hector’s eyes shook wildly.

“ ... ”

However, even that shaking was short lived.

Soon, Hector recovered from the shock.

It appeared as if there was still an opportunity.

An opportunity of a great ladder of possibility.

‘It wasn’t known as to how he appeared, but the bastard was all alone after all.’

It must have been a trickery created by magic.

In other words, there was no reason to fear.

‘Will kill. Even at a great price.’

He knows that the bastard was, in fact, a 6th class sorcerer.

However, this is in the midst of the midst of the enemy’s camp.

There are 5th class sorcerers, including the lord of Ma Tower.

And the troops that can wield mana.

‘Even a 6th class sorcerer wouldn’t be able to overcome them all...’

“He would think that, perhaps.”

There came a voice that impeded Hector’s thoughts.

In a low voice, Ian Page chanted.

“It’s not an incorrect assumption.”

Ian readily agreed.

The tower lord of the Ma Tower, the troops and the knights.

It would be a difficult challenge to survive from them all.

Even for Ian Page.

However, does Hector Coldwood know it?

“That.”

Ian Page, the tower lord of the Ivory Tower of the adversary empire, who was standing in front of him, has already surpassed the 6th class level. As far as the classes go, the differences between the levels become extremely clearer as the levels rise, and the fact that based on Ian’s experience and application abilities, those differences between the levels grow even further.

“Only that the intel was slow.”

Ian murmured lightly.

He began a spell.

Now, the mana has turned close to navy blue.

The sticky mana was being released into all directions.

“Arc Paralyze.”

It was definitely not an ordinary paralyze.

It was the ‘mob control magic’ that was applied with the quintessential skills of which only Ian could.

The influential power of that spell has permeated throughout the area.

The vast area of the military camp has been encompassed by it in no time.

“What, what is this?”

The troops were blinking their eyes.

It appeared as if sorcery has been released.

But there wasn’t any change.

“...?”

Actually, that was only a delusion.

A change has already taken place.

Only that it was silent.

“My, my body...!”

By the time they were able to sense it, no one was able to move. Those troops that did not have mana hearts saw their bodies solidify, and those knights that had mana hearts were only able to twist ever so slightly. That’s all they could do.

“Spell.”

Ian did not stop there.

As there still remained sorcerers.

“Disorder.”

Disorder spell.

The sorcery that renders ‘mana brain’, which is equivalent to the brain of magic, useless entered the sorcerers through their nostrils, mouths, and ears like evil spirit. The effect was quick.

“Krrr...!”

“What, what have you done...?”

How many seconds has it been since Ian has appeared?

The immobile troops and knights.

And sorcerers that could not wield magic either.

There was none that was in normal condition.

The army that was assembled as the primary force.

That army has instantaneously been overpowered.

That was, by only a single sorcerer.

“Hm.”

Yet, Ian still felt insufficient.

‘Warning’ is supposed to be powerful.

“Well.”

He raised his right foot.

Mana also converged there, too.

“Let’s raise the temperature little bit.”

The right foot was overwhelmingly filled with mana.

As he stumped with his foot.

“Gravity field.”

The bodies of the troops were beginning to be pressed down.

It was the same for the knights and sorcerers as well.

The ‘gravity force’ has become even more intense.

That was the power of the ‘gravity field’.

“Kr, Krrrrr!”

They could not tolerate it any more. Everyone that was overpowered by Ian knelt on their knees. Perhaps, that was better as had they not knelt, they felt that their lower bodies and spines might have gotten obliterated.

“Ah...”

In the midst of the unbelievable chaos.

Only Hector stood unharmed.

It wasn't because he was special.

It was only that Ian's magic had avoided him.

“Haha...”

His countenance appeared confused.

Even an empty laughter escaped him.

There would be no other fitting response.

“Shall we have a talk?”

Ian didn't show his usual courtesy.

“Hector Coldwood.”

Hector Coldwood drew his sword in response to Ian's spoken words. He was a knight born of a royal blood with mana heart. His talent was respectable as well. As it stands now, his level would be equivalent to that of Ian's, 6 years ago.

“You, bastard...!”

What usefulness is the high level sword skill, now?

In such a time as this when the sword, being held in his hand, is shaking uncontrollably.

“Preparation wasn't sufficient.”

Yet, Ian was still dissatisfied.

He approached Hector.

Tang!

With a simple sorcery, the sword has been removed.

Then he placed his hand on the bastard's shoulder.

"Do you want to see something fun?"

"What..."

"Teleportation."

What? Teleportation? That's how he certainly wanted to ask. But he could not finish his words. He was already being separated from the space by an unknown white light.

Flash!

Finally, all the streams of light have disappeared.

At the same time, the surrounding landscape came into views.

Into Ian's eyes as well as Hector's eyes.

"Where, where is this place..."

He was no longer in the military camp.

It was also not the Amber territory by the borders, for sure.

Yet, it was a very familiar place.

"Bedroom...?"

It was just hard to believe. He was in no other place than inside the palace of the Coldwood Empire, more specifically, in the crowned prince's bedroom, where he sleeps.

"What is going on..."

"Next."

Ian did not give him any rest.

Again, the surrounding landscape has changed.

From the palace, to the office of the Coldwood Empire.

Damidara, the open city, in which the agreement was reached.

From Morgrian territory to Phieric territory.

Even the middle of the Great East Prairie.

The final destination of the itinerary was the Amber territory.

It was the original place where the army's military camp was located.

"Hugh! Hugh! Hughhh!"

Hector Coldwood breathed tersely. At the same time, he applied all of his knowledge and the ability to discern. What he had experienced just now, what the hell was it?

'Could it...'

He formed a hypothesis without too much difficulty.

It was a very high probable hypothesis.

'Tele, teleportation?'

Spatial transportation magic, teleportation.

It was already a very widely known name.

It was a magic that everyone may have imagined at least once.

It was a spell that was highly facilitating and extremely useful.

Wouldn't that be the teleportation spell?

'No way.'

It was a magic that countless people have dreamed of.

Research on it has been in progress for a very long time.

The accompanying result wasn't just very successful, at all.

That's because there was not a sorcerer who could wield it in reality.

In the past, and in present time.

That was the subject of the homework for all the nations.

‘That... the bastard can?’

When his thoughts came to that point, Hector was able to feel that eerie warning, which Ian wanted to display.

‘Someone like me can be killed at any time.’

It wasn’t just Hector only.

It would be the same for anyone else.

If the bastard thought to do it.

If anyone touched Ian’s ego in the wrong way.

No one will escape it was what was being demonstrated.

‘The way to defend it... ’

Hector was very smart.

He was also very realistic at the same time.

So, he was certain.

‘Nothing.’

Inside the palace of the Coldwood Empire, ‘magic blocking devices’ that is equivalent to the concept of ‘mana prison’ have been installed in strategic places. Yet, he was able to freely come and go, to and from the palace, as if it was his own house. It was the proof that they did not work.

“I’m sure that you understood, as you’re a smart man.”

Ian has been able to extract the exact thoughts that Hector’s been having for a while. His words came in the most appropriate time and fashion.

“I’ll be brief. Return.”

Ian began to form mana.

It appeared like a sand hour glass.

Only that the size of it was humongous.

“Just one day.”

Shaped like an hour glass, the mana clock flipped over. Instead of sand, mana flowed down little bit at a time. It was enough for just one day.

“If you continue to slouch around by the borders, then from that time, we, I mean, I too will prepare for war.”

Ian stopped talking for a moment.

Then with a dry voice, he cited.

“Wouldn’t it end just after killing three or four?”

Of course, one of them would be Hector himself.

It was definitely very threatening.

But it wasn’t just an empty threat.

Ian has already demonstrated the capability.

That is, the method to prevent the war.

The spatial transportation magic.

“Return quietly and live as quiet as a mouse.”

Ian’s voice continued.

“I will allow you to maintain. Coldwood Dynasty.”

He will allow the dynasty to continue.

It was a statement of ultimate conceit.

But it was a statement from someone with the credentials.

Ian had the sufficient credentials to say such things now.

“The title of crowned prince was obtained by you, by indiscriminately killing even your younger and older siblings. You should maintain it.”

Ian's voice couldn't be any dryer.

There was not even a mockery, let alone murderous ambience.

"Isn't that right?"

Ian's question even seemed mischievous.

Yet, Hector could not let down his guard.

The smell of a predator permeated from the bastard.

Actually, not a common predator.

'Disaster.'

Right, it was a disaster.

The bastard is a disaster for sure.

That young man with brown hair.

The grand sorcerer of the Greenriver Empire.

The 'monster' in the name of Ian Page.

"Answer."

Ian urged for a response.

Hector hesitated for a moment.

Many are witnessing this.

How should it be responded to?

He did not think too long.

"... Understood."

Isn't surviving the first priority?

Saving face was only a short term issue.

However, staying alive is an immediate concern.

“Good.”

Ian nodded in satisfaction.

He snapped his thumb and index finger.

With a snap!

“Auuugk! Augk!”

The effects of the ‘arc paralysis’ and ‘gravity field’ that were put on the sorcerers, the knights and the troops dissipated. Yet, no one came against Ian. They were too busy saving their own-selves, let alone attacking. Was it because of any lingering after effects, or from just simply being terrified?

“It will take some more time for you, dear sorcerers. Please don’t worry too much as you will return to normal after about one hour.”

He has been consistently talking down to Hector Coldwood, but he spoke to the sorcerers, the underlings to Hector, with respect. The birthright and its associated authority were never the targets of Ian’s considerations. Who is leading the plans to annoy was what was important.

“To repeat myself one more time.”

The mana clock in the shape of an hour glass.

Ian spoke as he pointed to it.

“Until this time, tomorrow.”

Finally, white light flowed down.

It was the effect of the time due to teleportation.

“Hope you will make a smart choice.”

The warning has been given sufficiently.

Now, it was time to return.

“Your Highness.”



“Hugh.”

The Ivory Tower of the Greenriver Empire.

Ian returned to the tower lord’s room.

He sat in his seat as he caught his breath.

“That was close.”

Although he was very calm in front of Hector Coldwood and his army, Ian had consumed much larger amount of mana than he had thought. The repetitious teleportation, not to mention that maintaining the mob control magic in the first place were certainly the culprits that will consume much mana.

‘Being a man of return from the past has helped.’

The limit of teleportation is that it can only transport to the place that he has been to. But it was not an issue for Ian. He had satisfied such requirement for many places due to the unification war and travels in his previous life.

‘The effect should be sufficient.’

It must have been a perfect threat.

He may not even sleep well.

Hector Coldwood, that bastard.

How could he sleep comfortably?

‘The bastard had asked for it.’

There was not even an excuse if he was to die while suffering from sleep apnea. It was the fault of that bastard that planned a war. All that Ian had done was sent him a complete warning.

‘The problem seemed to have been corrected.’

There lies only the second issue.

The accelerated degradation of the present emperor’s health, that is.

And the movements of those that are behind it.

‘Now then...’

Ian placed his chin on the large desk.

Then he fell into a deep thought.

‘Where should I start?’



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